

THE  
LIFE  
AND  
MIRACLES  
OF  
St. WENEFREDE,

Together with her  
LITANIES.  
WITH SOME  
HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS  
made thereon.

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The SECOND EDITION.

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LONDON

Printed for SAM. BUCKLEY, at the Dolphin  
in Little-Britain. 1713.

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TO THE  
READER.

**B**OLLANDUS the Jesuit, in the third Chapter of his General Preface to the *Acta Sanctorum Januarii*, printed at Antwerp, 1643, lays down several Rules concerning the Credibility of History in general; but (as his Work led him) with a more particular Regard to the Credit of such as had written the *Lives and Miracles of Saints and Martyrs*. These Rules I offer to the Reader, and believe he will think them as reasonable as I have done, to be determined by, in passing his Judgment on the History of St. Wenefrede; and they will be, I know, the less exceptionable to such as I would win, because they come from one of that Order.

„ The First Degree of Credit (he says) is due  
„ to such as wrote the Lives of Men they knew,  
„ and saw, and lived withal. Thus Possidius wrote  
„ the Life of St. Austin; and thus, say I, St. Athanasius wrote the Life of St. Anthony of Egypt, and  
„ thus Sulpicius Severus wrote the Life of St. Mar-  
„ tin.

„ The Second Degree of Credit is due to such  
„ Authors, as wrote, not what they saw them-  
„ selves, but what they received from such as  
„ were Eye-witnesses. Thus Bonaventure wrote

the Life of St. Francis, St. Hierom of Hilarion,  
and a nameless Author the Life of St. Clarus.

The Third Degree of Credit is due to such as wrote, not what they had seen themselves, nor what they had heard from such as were Eye-witnesses, but what those People told them, who said they had it from such as were Eye-witnesses. This is what we call the Credit of the third Hand; and thus Pope Gregory wrote his *Dialogues*, and in them the Life of St. Benet; and thus St. Hierom wrote the Life of Paul the Hermite.

The Fourth Degree of Credit is due to such Authors as transcribe what they relate, from Writers that stand in any of the above-mentioned Degrees of Credit; or that make Collections from undoubted Monuments of Donations, Testaments, Transactions, or Commentaries, that are within the three first Rules of Credit. But this, with the good Father's Leave, need not have been made a distinct Rule, because it is indeed no Rule of it self, but the Observation of the three others; that is, he who transcribes from any Author of Credit, shall, if he do it faithfully, be as much believed, as that Author is himself from whom he transcribes.

And all the Writers of these Classes (saith the Jesuit) are to be believed, if they are wise and honest Men, and if their Writings are pure and genuine, and not at all adulterated; for the Credit of naughty Folks, and such as are over-credulous, is to be much suspected. These Conditions and Restrictions, of being wise and honest, and not over-credulous, do, in my Opinion, render the foregoing Rules very little useful or significant; and yet, to do him Justice, his Conditions and Restrictions are altogether as reasonable, as are his Rules. And whoever shall be at

## To the Reader

the Pains to read the tenth Part of what *Bollandus* had read of the Saints Lives, tho' written by Men within the three Rules, will find Reason (if he have the Courage) to own, that all those Rules without those Restrictions, are good for nothing; and that the Writers within those Rules, have left us such Relations and Accounts of Lives and Miracles of Saints, as can no more be believed by serious *Papists*, than what they know to be altogether Fiction and Invention can. The Writer of the Life of *Wenefredo*, was one who came neither within the Rules, nor the Restrictions: He lived not (as I shew hereafter at large) within 500 Years of her Death, nor cites any Author that did so; and I dare say he was not wise, and I am sure he was over-credulous; and he who will write in these Circumstances, cannot be very *honest*, I mean in the Quality of an Historian.

But there are (as he goes on) some Saints Lives, that were not written at all, (he means by Writers of the three Classes) or are lost; but their Names and their Miracles were remembered, and their Lives were written upon common Fame and Tradition. Here, *Judicio opus est*, here is need of Judgment and Discernment: If what is said agrees with what is delivered by other creditable approved Historians, 'tis well, and we must be content; we could wish those lost Lives were extant and entire; but—— Sometimes (he says) their Miracles only are preserved, but then they are so exaggerated, and so many new things added to them, that some People do really look upon them but as so many *old Wives Fables*.

But that which follows is much more remarkable and worth observing: We often meet with Miracles (saith he) which tho' we cannot deny but they might possibly be wrought, yet there is

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33 Such a *Cause* assign'd for them, and they are  
 33 done in such a *Way and Manners*, that one may  
 33 well doubt whether it became the Majesty of the  
 33 everlasting God so to supply Mens Wants, or yield  
 33 to their Requests, and hear their Prayers. But  
 33 because (so great is his Goodness) we cannot  
 33 fully comprehend what good things he hath pre-  
 33 pared in Heaven for those pure Souls that are  
 33 beloved of him, or how far he will please to gra-  
 33 tify them on Earth, we should not hastily con-  
 33 demn such Relations as seem exceedingly strange  
 33 and paradoxical to us, but rather receive them  
 33 with Reverence, as they are said to flow from  
 33 the Fountain of Divine Goodness, from whence  
 33 our whole Happiness is to be derived and fetch'd.  
 33 Let it be granted, that the things said to be  
 33 done, were not indeed done: What then?  
 33 greater things than they might possibly be done,  
 33 and were done at other Times, and in other  
 33 Places. Take Heed therefore of denying that  
 33 such things were done, because you think they  
 33 neither could, nor should have been done.  
 33 Poor Father! His Reason and good Sense con-  
 33 strained him to lay down very good Rules, and  
 33 to strengthen them with just Conditions and Re-  
 33 strictions; but the Books that lay before him were,  
 33 every one of them, Exceptions to those Rules, or  
 33 would admit of none of those Conditions and  
 33 Restrictions. He saw himself at the Head, as it  
 33 were, of twenty or thirty huge *Folios*, (so many  
 33 he might well imagine they would make, by what  
 33 himself had prepared) that would, every one of  
 33 them, contain a hundred and a thousand things,  
 33 senseless, ridiculous, incredible, unworthy of God,  
 33 and those good Saints; and what should he do,  
 33 but fall to softning those Conditions, and abating  
 33 of the Rigour of his Rules, and desiring his Rea-  
 33 der's Favour, to take things as he found them, with  
 33 all

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all their Faults? But as my Business is not to quarrel with *Bollandus*, (to whose Works I am obliged for several things) so I will only observe of him, that all the Advantage his Rules and Conditions give me, in the Case of *Wenefrede*, his Softnings, Relaxations, and Abatements, would deprive me of; and if I will be *persuaded* by him, I must believe her whole *Legend*, but if I follow *his Reason*, as well as my own, I must not believe a Word of it. But we have not done with this good Father yet; what follows concerns us somewhat nearer, and it is in the 24th Page of his Preface.

„ And because that God, in working Wonders,  
„ does usually accommodate himself to the Simplicity and Faith of Men, therefore (observe)  
„ the Lives of the *Irish Saints*, the *Scottish*, and the  
„ *British*, as well those of *Albion* as of *Armorica*  
„ (i. e. of *Bretany* in *France*) are (plain portents of a)  
„ downright monstrous, and made up of Miracles  
„ almost incredible; either because the Constancy  
„ of Faith was remarkably eminent among those  
„ People, or the Simplicity and Candour of their  
„ Lives exceeding rare and wonderful, or certainly  
„ because their Writers were more simple than  
„ those of other Nations (*aut certe quia scriptores*  
„ *simpliciores.*)

Here is a very sly and smart Reflection on all the Subjects of the Crown of *England*; for, let him soften it as he will, he means to call us a foolish and a credulous People. I wonder how a *Jesuit* came to say so, of either the Writers or Believers of our Saints Lives; but indeed, what he says is generally true. No People have ever swallowed down such senseless Legends, as our own senseless Writers have furnish'd us withal. I cannot choose but hope that the *Papists* among us, will take Notice of this Remark, that their Credulity is really contemptible, even amongst such People as are of the same

same Religion, and such as make their Advantage  
of it. It is not a Protestant Writer, but *Baillet*  
*an Jesuit*, that says (in the Life of *Gildas*, Jan. 29.)  
That, in the Lives of the British Saints, there  
are Abundances of things, that he could make  
nothing of, that could be brought under the  
Chronology, and were above all Belief. This  
*Godofride Henrichinus*, another Jesuit, the Partner  
and Continuer of his Labours, who (in *Messe*  
*Mais*, in his Preface to the Life of *St. Kellin*) says,  
That as to the Story of the two Harts, or Hinds,  
which came, uncall'd for, to carry the Saint's  
Body to Barial, and stopped of their own Ac-  
cord when they were come to the Place, and  
afterwards served the Inhabitants for plowing  
and other Husbandry-work, like tame Cattle,  
and came every Night when they were un-  
yok'd, to the Place where the holy Body lay,  
and licked the Sepulchre with great Devotion.  
That as to this Story (he says) he does not know  
whether he should receive it, or condemn it  
quite, because there are a World of things full  
as improbable as this, and more, that fill the Acts  
of the Irish Saints, which he thinks were written  
more to set People a staring and admiring, than  
to gain Belief. It is no Protestant, but *Father*  
*Mabilion*, a *Benedictine Monk*, whose Learning, Ho-  
nesty, and good Qualities we hold in great Esteem,  
is he, who (in his Preface to the *Acta SS. Ord.*  
*Benedict.* Vol. 1. 1668. put out at Paris) says,  
There are some who have the Vice of feigning  
or believing any thing, both as it were and  
bred with them, and which they derive (he  
thinks) from the very Nature of the Soil. And  
many there are who lay this to the Charge of  
the *Armorique*, and the English Writers of Saints  
Lives; and to this Purpose, he quotes a Passage  
out of *Petrus Collensis* (one that lived about 1180.)



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to *Nicholas an English Monk*, where he tells him the Island was encompassed with Waters, and the Inhabitants partook of the Qualities of that instable Element; and were turn'd about with every Wind and Fancy, and were so fond of their idle Dreams, that they compared them to Visions, nay, and preferr'd them." I cannot choose (I say) but hope, that the *Papists* of our Islands will consider these Accounts and Characters, that learned Foreigners, Priests, and Jesuits give of our Countrymen, who have written the Lives of our Saints; and will hereafter abate something of their Fondness and Credulity, and give such Authors no more Credit than they deserve, or than they would give them, had they written any other Histories, and Accounts of Things or Persons, and not the Lives and Miracles of Saints.

After this short Digression, I return to *Bollandus's* Preface, who thinking, I believe, that his Reflection would bear a little hard upon our *British* Writers, and our *British* Saints, tries, in the next Words, to make us some Amends; „ Neither (says he) can any one (tho' never so ill inclined) deny that many Miracles have been wrought among those People, (*i. e.* the *Irish, Scottish, English, Welsh, and Britons of Armorica*) since even at this Day (his Book came out in 1643.) the Places which were heretofore devoted to the Honour of the Saints, are famous yet for many Miracles wrought at them; altho' the Worship of the Saints has long been banish'd and put down, among those Hereticks. There is great Concourse still to *St. Wenefrede the Virgin's Well*, in the extreamest Parts of *North Wales*, of such as seek a Cure for their Diseases and Distempers. And a Man of great Quality (*Vir Illustris*, and every Gentleman is *Vir Illustris* abroad) assured me he hath seen even Hereticks themselves resorting to that *Well*, to

B

„ seek

„ seek for Help ; and when he asked them, why  
 „ they, who were of the new Religion, which  
 „ forbade the Invocation of Saints, as of Souls that  
 „ either slept till the Resurrection, or that, if they  
 „ were in Heaven, knew nothing of our Affairs  
 „ below, why they should fall into the Dotages of  
 „ the *Papists*, (as they were daily taught, by their  
 „ Ministers, the Preachers of the *fifth Gospel*, to  
 „ call them) and come to *St. Wenefrede's Well* for  
 „ Help? They made him this Answer, That they  
 „ neither cared, nor minded, what their Ministers  
 „ prated in the Pulpit ; they very well remembred  
 „ that the Waters of that *Well*, were used to do  
 „ Good both to themselves, and to their Cattle,  
 „ and to the Cattle of their Fathers, and that they  
 „ used to impute this Benefit either to *St. Wenefrede*,  
 „ or to *God* the Author of all Good. The Answer  
 of these Hereticks to this Person, of Quality is so  
 remarkable, that I must not trust my Translation  
 of it to the Reader, without giving him the Words  
 in Latin, *Respondisse eas, Quid in Pulpitis illi ganniant,*  
*sibi Cura non esse ; meminisse illius Fontis aquam sibi,*  
*suisque gregibus, ac Parentum suorum, esse salutarem*  
*consuevisse ; idqua vel Diva Wenefredæ, vel Deo boni*  
*omnis Auctori, acceptum scribi.*

The Reader will, by this Time, perceive, that  
 I did not concern my self with this *Jesuit* at meer  
 Adventure, and only because he was a *Jesuit*, and  
 put out the *Acta Sanctorum* ; but because he med-  
 dled much with our *British Saints*, and reproaches  
 us very hardly, and makes especial Mention of the  
*Saint*, whose Story I am searching into: And I de-  
 sire that, before I leave him, I may make some few  
 Observations on his last Relation, which I think is  
*Jesuitical* all over. And *First*, there is no need of  
 denying that many Miracles have been wrought in  
*England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Bretagne in*  
*France.* No doubt but God hath wrought Wonders  
 amongst

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amongst us, as well as in other Places; and hath made some of our holy Men and Women, Instruments of doing great things, as well as other People. We are no Enemies to Miracles, but we desire to be assured that they were wrought, before we believe them. *Secondly*, We have no need to deny that Miracles were wrought in such a Place, where such a Saint was heretofore honoured, even since the Reformation. Let any one prove that such a Miracle has been wrought by God at *Holy-well*, and there is no reasonable Man will deny it to have been wrought at *Holy-wells*. What would these People have? but would it follow presently, that if a Miracle were wrought at *Holy-well*, it must needs be wrought by St. *Wenefrede*, or by God for her Sake, and at her Intercession? God, for his Mercy's Sake, and through the Intercession of his blessed Son, may hear the Prayers of such as call upon him faithfully at *Holy-well*, and may work Wonders in the Favour of such Supplicants; and yet the Saint of *Holy-well* may have no Share in that good Issue. I do not, for my own Part, believe, that any Miracles have been wrought at *Holy-well*, either before or since the Reformation, because I see none proved: But if there had, it would not have followed, that St. *Wenefrede* had had any Hand therein. This is a Fallacy that easy credulous Souls do often suffer to be put upon them; who, if they happen to pray for Relief in the Church of such or such a Saint, and it pleases God to give them what they ask, do immediately impute to the Merits and Intercession of that Saint, the obtaining their Request. This false Conclusion has been the Rise, the Progress, and Continuance of abundance of Superstition. *Thirdly*, That there is still a great Concourse of People from all Quarters to *Wenefrede's Well*, does only prove that there are still a great many crafty Priests, who find their Account



In sending a great many weak deluded People on such Errands: It does not prove that they obtain the Remedies they come to seek, nor the Cures they stand in need of. *Fourthly*, 'Tis true that many of those, whom the Jesuit and his Person of Quality call *Hereticks*, do also resort to *this Well*, to seek Help. 'Tis a very cold Spring, and is good, as other cold Springs are, in many Cases; but the *Hereticks* seek for Help from God, and no Body else; and if they find it, by the Means of those Waters, they return God Thanks, and no Body else, and bless his holy Name for having given such salutary Virtue to that Well; and, I dare say, that, in proportion to the Number of those that use those Waters, as many *Protestants* as *Papists* receive Benefit from them. The *Papists* come to St. *Wenefrede's* Well for Help, and so do the *Protestants*; the *Papists* expect some Help from *Wenefrede*, the *Protestants* none; if the *Papists* receive any Help, they impute it to the Merits and Intercession of St. *Wenefrede*, and are thankful to God and her; if the *Protestants* find any Benefit there, they thank God, and mind not *Wenefrede*, but impute it to God's Blessing and the cold Waters. This had been the right Representation of the Man of Quality to the Jesuit; but this had signified nothing to the Honour of St. *Wenefrede*, which the Man of Quality did certainly intend, and the Jesuit makes the Story seemingly end so, but indeed if you consider it well, it ends just as it should when told by a *Jesuit*, i. e. *equivocally*; which made me say the Relation was *Jesuitical* all over, and most of all at the Conclusion. The Man of Quality charges the *Protestants*, with believing that the Souls of the Saints sleep till the Resurrection; This is a false Charge, a Pope indeed hath been condemned and deposed for holding this, among many other false Opinions, but the *Protestants* hold none such. The Man

of Quality charges the Protestants, with not calling upon the Saints, because they know nothing of our Affairs below. If the Saints knew nothing of our Affairs below, the Papists, I believe, would no more invoke them, than the Protestants. But this is not what the Protestants say, that I know of, in Justification of their not praying to Saints; but they say, that they do not know, nor have any Means of knowing, whether the Saints above know any thing of our Affairs below. A Man would not pray to God himself, unless he was sure that God could hear his Prayers, and knew his Wants, and was able to relieve him, if he saw fit. Now the very Reasons that induce a Protestant to pray to God, must hinder him from praying to Saints and Angels: He does not know that Saints or Angels understand his Wants; he does not know that they can hear his Prayers, if he should make them; nor does he know that they can help him in his Necessities, although they heard his Prayers. In a word, he knows nothing of Souls departing in the Favour of God, but that they are happy. When it is made very plain that the Saints above know our Affairs below; when it is made very plain that they can hear the Prayers of such as call upon them from all Parts of Her Majesty's Dominions at one and the same time; and when it is made plain that they can not only hear, but grant our Requests, of what kind soever: When these things are made plain, the Protestants will not, I think, be backward to call upon the Saints. All these Powers are manifest in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; upon them we are bid to call, and upon them we call with all Assurance of being heard. God is in every Place, and therefore all the Ends of the Earth may pray to him at once. God knoweth every thing, and therefore knows what every one stands in need of; and God is able

to

to do what he pleases, and therefore able to grant us every thing we ask, if he sees fit. Let but the Saints be proved to be Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent, and they will then, and not till then, deserve to be the Object of Prayer. And since we have a God thus qualified to pray to, what Need have we to seek for any other? But the Hereticks, it seems, do come to *Wenefrede's Well*, let their Preachers prate as long as they please against it; and know that both they and their Cattle, and the Cattle of their Fathers, have received Benefit from those Waters. What then? so they do still. These *Rusticks* were, I think, too much for the Man of Quality, and having pleased him with giving a hard Word to their Ministers, made him believe they had a great Veneration for his Saint, by saying that they and their Fathers, and both their Cattle, had found great Benefit from those Waters; which might be said by those who knew and believed nothing of *Wenefrede's* Story: For observe the Chour, they tell him, that this was constantly ascribed either to St. *Wenefrede*, or to God. I cannot but think that *Hollandus* laughed to himself when he heard and told this Story; for is there a Protestant in the World who will not own freely, that whatever Benefits any Persons or any Cattle have received by the Waters at *Holy-well*, they received them either from God, OR from St. *Wenefrede*? This is the Way of cheating Children; Children in Understanding as well as in Years. Had they said, That the World was created either by God, OR by St. *Wenefrede*, they had said what was exactly true; but it had been too ludicrous a Way of speaking, when that Supream, Eternal, and Almighty Being is concerned. And thus I take my Leave of this good Father, desiring my Reader to turn to these Rules of his, and to apply them, when he finds it convenient, to the Legend of St. *Wenefrede*;

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*frede*; and to give it such Credit as, according to them, it shall deserve.

It remains now that I give some Account of the following Work. I will not be troublesome to the Reader in telling him what my Relation to *Holy-well* is, and how I came to be engaged in the Design of discrediting the Story of *St. Wenefrede* in particular. It is enough that I am a Protestant, a Member of the Church of England, and have a Zeal for the Purity of God's Service, and a sincere Desire of undeceiving the Papists in this erroneous and very hazardous Point of *Saint-worship*. And as *Wenefrede* is held for a Saint of great Reputation among them, and great Resort is had to *Holy-well* by *Pilgrims* (as they call them) from all the different Quarters of the Kingdom, and even from *Ireland* too, to pay their Devotions to her in the Place where she is said to have suffered Martyrdom; so I believed it would be of Use to take her History into particular Consideration. To this Purpose I set my self the hard Task of procuring and reading whatever had been written concerning her by any Author, either in Print or Manuscript, ancient or modern, that I could get: And if I were not very sure I had a good Design in doing it, I should be a little ashamed of having spent so much of my Time in reading so much Trash: But so it is, that I am able (I doubt) to say, That I have seen more of Her than most Men now living have done; and have moreover looked into almost all our *Historians* to find NOTHING said concerning her. The first Account I fell upon was the Life of *Wenefrede*, written by an Anonymous Author, in the *Cotton-Library*, *Claudianus A. 5.* which I have therefore called *The Cotton-Life*. This was certainly written after the *Norman Times*, because the *Normans* are mentioned therein under the Name of *Francotuns*, which was the Word then, and some time after, used, to distinguish the

the French from the English Subjects; but it was not long after, for the Character and Writing seem to be of that Age; and by the Plainness of Style, and Simplicity of Narration, I judge it to have been written between the Years 1100 and 1200, by some good *Welshman*, who knew nothing of her Translation to *Shrewsbury*, but leaves her bury'd at *Guithelin*, and tells of no Miracles done there, or elsewhere, but at *Holy-well*, which yet he never mentions by that or any other particular Name.

The next Life I read was that written by *Robertus Salopiensis*, of great Length, and is to be found in the Bodley-Library at Oxford amongst A. Bp. Laud's MSS. L. 21. fol. 140. This Work is dedicated by one Robert the Prior of *Shrewsbury* to one *Guarine* the Prior of *Worcester*; and at the End of his Work he says, the Bones of *Wenefrede* were translated to *Shrewsbury* in or about the Second Year of King Stephen, which was about 1137 or 1138; and between the Years 1130 and 1140 there was one *Guarine* Prior of *Worcester*; and 'tis certain from *Ordericus Vitalis*, that about the same Time one *Herbertus* (mentioned by Robert) was Abbot of *Shrewsbury*, and succeeded *Godfredus*. But although the Time and the Names agree very well, yet I am not without some Scruples that neither the Life of *Wenefrede* is quite so old as 1140, nor her Translation so early as 1138; nor am I quite satisfied that Robert, who wrote the Life, was the same Man who wrote the Account of her Translation, though they are now joined together: But as I build nothing upon these Suspicions, so I will content myself with setting down, in its proper Place, a Reason or two why I believe her Translation was not so early, without drawing any Consequence from thence to the Prejudice of Robert's History, which I allow to be of its pretended Age, viz. about 1140.

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The next was a short Life of *Wenefrede*, written by a nameless Author, consisting of Five Chapters, mostly taken out of the *Cotton-Life*, a little out of *Roberts*, and the rest added by the Author himself. The Book in which it is, belonged heretofore to *Ramsay-Abby*, came afterwards into Sir *James Ward's* Library, and a Copy from thence was procured by the late Mr. *H. Dodwell* for the Use of Dr. *Humphreys*, late Bishop of *Hereford*, who had designed to have given a full Account of the Rise and Progress of this fabulous Story; and who by his great Skill in the Antiquities and History of *North-Wales*, which was his native Country, was very able to have done it. What diverted him from his Purpose I know not, but he seems (by what remains of his) only to have gathered his Materials together in order to it, and just to have begun.

The next in Order of Time, was the Abbreviation of *Robert of Salop's* Life by *John of Tinmouth*, about the Year 1366, in his Book called *Sanctilogium*, as Archbishop *Usher* tells us; and this is the Life of *Wenefrede* which is found in *John Capgrave* at this Day, the greatest Part of whose Legend is but a Transcript of *Tinmouth's* Work, put into Alphabetical Order for the Use and Convenience of the Reader: But the Expiliator's Name being so much better known than the Man's from whom he copied, I all along call it *J. Capgrave's* Life of *Wenefrede*.

But the Piece that should be, methinks, of the greatest Authority, is the Account of her Life in the Nine Lessons in the *BREVIARY Secundum usum Sarum*, which were read in the Church upon the 3d of November (which was appointed to be the Saint's Day) in the same manner that the Epistles and Gospels are now read among us. And these Lessons were read in *Latin*, yet they were also put into *English*, and very well known among the



common People, who held them in great Esteem, and believed them without Scruple, because they were commanded to be *used and read in Churches*, though in another Tongue for Order and Uniformity's sake throughout the Catholick Church.

This *Capgrave's Life of Wenefrede* was abbreviated, and a little altered by *Lawrence Surin*, a *Carthusian*, and put into his Work in its proper Month and Day, and from him abbreviated yet farther by a *German Monk*, whose Name I have not now by me, though I have read it. 'Tis also *Capgrave's Life* that *M. Alford* the *Jesuit* hath transcribed into his *Annals* in the Year 660, and which *Cressy* translated. Her Life is also to be found in *Old English Rhime* of about 300 or 400 Years standing, in the publick Library at *Oxon*, *Super Art. A. 72. fol. 189*, as also in Prose in the *English Legend*. But in the Year 1631 it pleased one *J. F.* a *Jesuit* to translate into *English* the Life of our Saint from the *Latin* of *Robertus Salopiensis*, and to add a *Preface* and a *Conclusion* of his own; and as this is the most authentick Account of her, so it is what went most about in *Popish Families*. And upon this Book's growing scarce, an unknown Person thought fit this last Year, in 1712, to give us a *Reimpression* (as he calls it) of *J. F.*'s admirable Life of *St. Wenefrede*, with an additional Account of some more modern Miracles wrought by that Saint. Upon Sight of this last little Book, I laid aside the Design I had form'd of putting out the *Cotton-Life* of *St. Wenefrede* in *English*, with a large Chapter of *Historical Notes* added to it, together with a Chapter of *the Superstition of Waters*, and another of *the Growth of Miracles*; This Design, I say, I have for a little while laid aside, and thought it better for the present to give the Reader this *New Life*, with such *Observations* upon it, as I thought would be most for his Service, whether Protestant or Papist. But as

I have

I have in several Places referred him to these Chapters, I assure him they are in such a Readiness, that he shall not, if there be Occasion, long be without them. I have, for the Popish Reader's Sake, left out nothing of the *Editor's* Book.

This is a small Account of the following Work, for which, as the Times go, I expect neither Praise nor Approbation; but shall be well content if I do any true Service to either Protestant or Popish Reader thereby. The *Editor* says in *Pag. 175.* That in „ the Travelling Season the Town of *Holy-well* ap- „ pears populous, crowded with zealous Pilgrims „ from all Parts of *Britain*. The *Well* it self re- „ ceives a Succession of Visitors from Sun-rise till „ late at Night.

This, I hope, will justify the present Undertaking, and shew it is not altogether unseasonable for a Protestant to be a little zealous for his Religion also, when Superstition has so many Votaries. I did not indeed think, a few Years ago, that one should have wanted an Apology for speaking or writing against Popery, in any Branch of it. I looked upon it as a constant Enemy, a standing Force always in Readiness to fall upon us, and sworn, in a manner, to our Destruction; and therefore that we were, as good Protestants, obliged to be upon our Guard continually, and to annoy them all we could. But there has been since that so marvellous a Silence, and so profound a Secrecy in that respect, that to betray any Fears of its returning now, is not only a Mark, it seems, of a weak Understanding, and little Insight into publick Matters, but also (if you will believe some Men) of ill Design and Disaffection to the Government. But I confess I cannot carry my Respect so far to any Governours, as to believe we are secure, because some People tell us so, against the Alarms our Senses daily give us to the contrary. I

cannot chuse but think that this *Security* it self is one of our worst Symptoms. Whether the *Dogs* bargain with the *Wolves* to hold their Tongues, or whether they bark not, out of Fear, or Lazyness, or Complaisance, the Flock, I think, is not a Jot the safer. The Enemy we have to deal with grows more numerous, is active, vigilant, and daring, daily pushes on its Conquests, is in good Heart, and under no Discouragement but that of *Laws*, rejoyses in our Unconcernedness, confirms us in our Indolence, and tells us, if we suspect them we are unreasonable. And for these Reasons I should be glad to see Men somewhat more afraid of their Inveterate Enemy, talk somewhat louder against *Papery* both from the Pulpit and the Press, and tell the People, That if that Superstition ever settles here again upon the Throne, there is an End of their Religion, Liberty, and Property, and every thing besides, that Life is worth the living for.

THE



# THE Editor's Preface

## TO THE *Devout Pilgrims.*

" **T** IS to you, of what Degree and Condition  
" on soever, that I dedicate these few  
" Sheets. You, in Equity, claim a Right  
" to them, above the rest of *Great Bri-*  
" *tain*; because with painful, yet chearful Steps, you  
" measure Journies from the remotest Part of our Island,  
" to the miraculous Head of the *Holy Spring*; where you  
" mix with the rapid Current warm Tears of perfect Con-  
" trition; and shivering in the Stream, you look up to  
" that Omnipotent Power which raised *St. Wenefride* to  
" such eminent Sanctity and Glory.

### O B S E R V A T I O N S.

**T** HE Author of the following *Observations* does also de-  
dicate them, in great Earnest, to these same *devout Pil-*  
*grims*; and prays them to believe, that as he seriously intend-  
ed them for their especial Use and Service, so he does truly  
mean and wish well to them. He also thinks they have a bet-  
ter Claim to them, because they make such painful Journies to  
this *Well*, from the remotest Quarters of the *Island*. It is to  
save these painful Journies, to such sincere and well-designing  
People, that he hath undertaken this little Work. He would  
not by any Means, abate or cool the Fervours of their Devo-  
tion, but he would have them spent in a much better Manner,  
and fixt upon a nobler Object, that both requires and deserves  
them

them all, and, in due Time, will recompence them all. He is no Enemy to Tears, or any other Tokens of true Contrition; but he believes they are shed in a very wrong Place, when shed at *Holy-well*, in Contemplation of *St. Wenefrede's* Sufferings, Sanctity, and Glory; because he thinks there are no sufficient Proofs, that she ever suffered, that she was a Saint on Earth, or is now glorified in Heaven. These are the Reasons why he would not have the *Pilgrims* take such Pains, to pay undue Honour to one, who, for any thing they know, is an imaginary Saint, and of whose very Being there can be no Proofs brought, that would satisfy a reasonable Man, in any other Point of History; much less in the Case of *Pilgrimage*, where the Business is, to thank God for his Gifts and Graces bestowed upon the Saint; or to pray to that Saint for something that we want; or to pray to God to hear us for that Saint's Sake; or to that Saint to intercede with God for us. In all which Cases a Pilgrim ought to have the fullest Assurance, and the greatest Certainty that is possibly to be had, 1<sup>st</sup> That *Wenefrede* did once live, as surely as he himself now lives; 2<sup>dly</sup>, That she was a Saint upon Earth, as surely as he is a Sinner; 3<sup>dly</sup>, That she had her Head struck off at *Holy-well*, and miraculously set on again, as surely as he is now at *Holy-well* himself, and has his Head upon his Shoulders; 4<sup>thly</sup>, That she is now glorified in Heaven, as surely as he is now praying on Earth. I would desire the *Pilgrims* to this *Holy Spring*, to consider with themselves, whether they can or ought to want any of these Points of Certainty, of the Life, and Death, and Sanctity, and Glorification of *St. Wenefrede*, in case they are required to thank God for her, or to pray to her; and then, to give me the Patience of reading the following Observations, in which I have endeavoured to shew, that they neither have, nor can have, that Certainty and Assurance of her Life, and Death, and Sanctity, which ought to be the Bottom of Praise to God for her, or Prayer to her herself. This is the Purpose of the following Observations; and which I could not avoid repeating often.

„ I have seen tender Virgins, who would look pale,  
 „ and tremble at a Northern Blast, sinking themselves under Water, offering their Vows and Prayers with as great  
 „ Alacrity, as if they had been partaking of the most transporting Joys upon Earth. The interior Fire of Divine Love got the upper Hand of the cold Element,  
 „ and flaming Petitions mounted up to bring down expected Blessings.

This is very high indeed. Devotion has its Transports certainly; but every Body will not easily believe that they are  
 either

either raised, or cherished much, by plunging into very cold Waters. St. *Benedict* rolled himself, all naked, in a Bed of Briars and Nettles, for another Purpose; and St. *Francis* made to himself a Mistris of a large *Sun-bell*: But I believe they were rather voluntary Penances, than any great Helps to Devotion at that Time, how useful soever they might afterwards prove. And I doubt that these adventurous Virgins must be content to hear the Standers-by, pass much the same Judgment upon their Undertakings, if they will not be content to own they come, as others do, for Health and for Refreshment. I do, in great Earnest, wish these Waters had more salutary Virtues in them, than I think they have: 'tis for the Country's Good, and for the good of every one. But I would not have these good Effects, whatever they are, assigned to so wrong a Cause, as they are by poor deluded Pilgrims, or rather by those who sought to teach them better.

No Complaint was heard except this pious one, that they knew little of the Merits of the Saint; only that this was the Place of her Martyrdom, and that it was famed for miraculous Cures, both of Soul and Body. This valuable Consideration engaged me to undertake, what I here offer unto you, not to gratify Curiosity, but to promote Piety and Devotion.

Pilgrims are usually reasonable enough in these Cases, and complain of little more than of the Hardships of their Journeys. The Men that send them on these Errands, and the Men that live upon the Place to which they are sent, have generally a good Understanding betwixt them, and take care to keep up the Credit of each other; and above all, to magnify the Saint, whose Shrine they are to visit. The Pilgrims to St. *Wenfrid's Well*, were exceedingly satisfied, it seems, that she was a great Saint, and that *Holy-well* was the Place where she suffered Martyrdom, and famous for many wonderful Cures wrought both on Peoples Souls and Bodies; but they wanted, belike, to know the Particulars of her Life and Death a little better; and this Author undertakes, in the following Book, to give them Satisfaction. I have already said a little, and shall hereafter have Occasion to say much more, to convince both him and his Pilgrims, that neither can He give, nor They have, the Satisfaction wanted in this Matter. I will only add in this Place, that I believe no one can produce any Author, either written or printed, who mentions any Parish, Church, or Well, to have been in the Place where *Holy-well* now stands, beyond the Year 1170. In *Domesday-Book*, which was made between the Years 1084 and 1086, there is no such Name to be found, tho' *Gromann*, *Presfittyn*, *Disford*, *Gulgrave*, *Moston*, *Whitford*, *Caster*,



his, *Holkum, Skelviog*, and other adjacent Towns, (that now lie in *Flynthshire*, but were then reckoned in *Cheeshire*) are to be found, with little Variation of the Names. This is indeed a negative Argument, and in it self not very concluding, because the not naming a Place, is not a Proof that no such Place was then: But to such as know the Nature and Intent of making that Book, which was to be a *Survey*, as it were, and *Trier* of the whole Kingdom, by which the Kings were to know their Strength, and rate their Wealth in Taxes; to such, I say, the Silence of *Doomsday-Book* will be a kind of Proof, that *Holy-well* was not then a Parish or Place of any Note. The British Name of it is *Treffynnen*; in English *Well-town*; but the oldest Date of that, that I can find, is not, I guess, much above 4000 Years. The Word *Holy-well* is evidently *Saxon*, and the first Time it appears to me, is in the *Charter* of Confirmation made to *God, St. Mary*, and the *Monks of Basingwerk*, in *Flynthshire*, by King *Henry III*, tho' it has hitherto been thought to be *Henry II*; but since the King there gives the Lands which once belonged to *W. Peverell* in the Time of King *Henry* his Grandfather, and it is certain that *Henry II* took away those Lands from *W. Peverell*, because he was found to have poisoned *Ranulfe* the second Earl of *Chester*, in or about the Year 1154, therefore 'tis plain that *Henry* here named must have been *Henry III*, whose Grandfather *Henry II* was. It was this *Ranulfe* Earl of *Chester* that is said to have founded *Basingwerk*, in the Year 1131; so the *Monasticon*, Vol. I. p. 720; but *John Brompton* in his *Chronicon*, and *Hen. Knighton*, tell us it was *Henry II*, that founded the Monastery of *Basingwerk*, after the Year 1150, tho' they do not agree in the Year. The Way to reconcile these things, is to say, that King *Henry II* was the Founder, but *Ranulfe* Earl of *Chester* the great Benefactor, who gave them *Holy-well*, *Fulbrooks*, and other Places; not so early as 1131, nor yet so late as 1154, but some time between those Years. There is also mention made of *Hali-well* in the Charter of Confirmation made to the same Monastery, by *Lleweline* Prince of *Wales* and *David* his Son, 1240. But let the *Well* be as old as it will, the Silence of *Giraldus Cambrensis*, who went the Visitation Circuit with *Baldwine* Archbishop of *Canterbury* in 1188, is one of the shrewdest Signs in the World, that the *Well* was then in no Credit at all; for tho' he says they lay all Night at *Basinwerk*, which is not above half a Mile from *Holy-well*, and to which, as you have seen above, *Holy-well* belonged, yet he says not one Word of either the Place, or the *Well*, or the *Saint*, or of any Cures or Miracles wrought at that Place by her; and yet there is hardly a Page in all that *Itinerarium Cambriae*, but has some one or more ridiculous and superstitious Stories in it: Which is a sort of Demonstration to such as know the Manner of that Writer, that it was not for want of believing or remembering, but of hearing and knowing

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knowing any thing remarkable of *Wenefrede*, or *Holy-well*, that he made no Mention of them. There is also at the End of *Nennius*, in the *Cotton-Library*, *Vitell. A. 13.* a Page or two, with the Title—*De Mirabilibus Wallia*, in which there is Mention made of other Springs and Waters in *Wales*, famous for something or other, but not a Word of *Holy-well*. The Reader, I hope, will be content that I endeavour now and then to gratify his Curiosity, in such Remarks as these, since the Editor's Views and mine are very different.

„ The Life of *St. Wenefride* was first written by *St. Elerius*, who is frequently mentioned in it.

There is no other Proof in the World that ever there was any such Man in Being as *Elerius*, but his being mentioned in the Life of *Wenefrede* written by *Robertus Salopianus*; and in this Life there is not one Word said of his having written any thing about her. *J. Leland* in *C. 49. De Scriptorib. Brit.* gives this Account of him: „ *Elerius* was heretofore, and still is, in great Esteem amongst the *Welch*. I take him to have studied first at *St. Asaph*, upon the Banks of the River *Elwy*, and afterwards to avoid the Noise and frequency of People, to have retired, as it were, into the Desert. This is most manifest, that he erected a Monastery somewhere about the *Vale of Glwyd*, in which there was a great Number both of Men and Women, amongst whom was *Wenefrede*, a noble Virgin, bred up by *Beuno*, and whose Head was afterwards cut off by *Caradoc*, her furious Lover.

Most of this is taken out of the Life of *Wenefrede*, written by *Robert*, and has no more Authority than that can give it: But here is no Mention of any Life written by *Elerius*, which yet had been much to *Robert's* Purpose, and would have given him great Credit, if he could have said that Part of the Account of *Wenefrede* was written by *Elerius*, one that lived at the same Time with her, and was her Spiritual Father and Instructor. This was an Advantage that *Robert* could not have overlooked, but he knew nothing of it: And that is an unanswerable Proof that *Elerius* did not write the Life of *Wenefrede*. That he studied (if ever there was such a Man) upon the Banks of *Elwy*, is said by *Leland*, perhaps upon as good Ground as if he had said the Banks of *Jordan*; and I dare say the one may be as well proved as the other can. I do not hereby mean that *Leland* invented this Story, but that he transcribed it out of some Manuscript he met with in his Searches, and set it down (as his Way was) out of his Author, without believing it any more than I do. That *St. Asaph* should be a Place of great Resort, and a kind of University, where, amongst other Inhabitants, there dwelt 965 Monks, 300 of which looked after the Cattle and the Plough, and

300 more were busied in the Offices of the Monastery, and in providing Diet and other Necessaries for the rest; and the remaining 300 were Students and Priests, and employed in the Service of God; that these People should live in the Town of St. Asaph is very amply attested in the Legend of St. Kentigern, written by Joceline a Monk, and much about the same time with Robert, and of full as good Authority; but it would be very strange if Leland, or any one who knew the Country and Place, should believe it. One Thing more I think fitting to observe about Elerius's writing the Life of St. Wenefrede, and that is, That Dr. Thomas James, formerly Library-Keeper at Oxford, and a very learned Man, finding the Life of Wenefrede in the Cotton-Library, written by a nameless Author, noted by the Margin these Words:—*Per Elerium Britannum Monachum, Anno 660.* I doubt not but he was led into this Mistake by the ordinary Tradition; for had he read the Life it self, he would have found it written by one who lived after William the Conqueror's Time, which is 400 Years after the pretended Elerius's Time. There is also another Note added to Dr. James's by another Hand, thus:—*Vel potius per Robertum Salopiensem, Anno 1140, ut Vir quidam eruditus melius docet.* But this is also a Mistake, for the Life in the Cotton-Library contradicts Robert in some Places, and is not one sixth Part so long, as they who will compare them may see. Who this *Vir eruditus* was I know not, but the Person who says this of him, was the late learned Dr. Tho. Smith in his Account of the Cotton-Library; but neither the one nor the other had seen the Life written by Robert.

„ From him (i. e. from Elerius) Robertus Salopiensis collects and supplies, especially what related to the Translation of her Holy Body, he being the chief Agent in bringing the same to his Monastery. This Robert, the worthy Prior of Shrewsbury (who afterwards, for his great Talents, was chosen Abbot) wrote the Saint's Life soon after the Translation of that Treasure, which was in the Year of our Lord God 1138.

It is indeed said in Robert's Account, that the Translation of these Bones was made in the Second Year of King Stephen, which falls in 1137-8. But to this I have two or three Objections. First, That the Life of Wenefrede in the Cotton-Library (which was plainly written after the Norman Kings, as appears by *Diebus quinetiam Francorum*: And, *In tempore quoque Francorum*: And, *Pacis jure ubique per Patriam violata, Francis atque Gualensibus se ad invicem oppugnantibus*; and more of the like Kind, which evidently refer to the Times of the Norman Princes, of whom King Stephen was the last.) From this Life,

I say,

I say, it appears that the Body of St. Wenefrede was even then at Guitherin, the Place where she lived, and died, and was buried. *Locum quidem, quo cum virginibus conversata, Guitherin, vocatur; quo etiam post vitam dormitionem, cum Consolationibus virginibus, VII Kalendas Julii, sepulta requiescit in Christo.* Whoever will read this Life of Wenefrede will find it was written by a Welchman; and since it was written after the Times of the Norman Kings, and no Mention made of the Removal of her Body or Bones to Shrewsbury, but taken for granted that she still lay buried at Guitherin, it is not very likely that the Translation was so early as 1138, which was the second Year of King Stephen; at least the Writer of this Life had heard of no such thing. who, I say, in all Likelihood wrote after the Days of Henry the First, if not after those of Stephen; because it is not reconcileable with either Custom or common Sense for a Writer to say, *In the Days of the Normans; or, In the Norman Times; or, In the Times when the Normans and the Welch were at Wars,* unless he wrote at least a little after those Times.

Another Objection to this early Translation of Wenefrede's Bones to Shrewsbury is this, That *Ordericus Vitalis* says nothing of this Matter, who was as likely as any Man else to do it, if he had heard of it, because of his near Relation and Affection to this Monastery at Shrewsbury. The Account he gives of himself is, That he was born in the Year 1074, the XIV Kal. March, and baptized at *Actingesham*, not far from Shrewsbury, a Town upon the Severn, by one *Ordericus*, a Priest, who gave him his own Name, and was his God-father; at Five Years old he was sent to School at Shrewsbury to one *Sigward*, a Priest, who taught in the Church of St. Peter and Paul, which Church belonged to *Odelirius*, his Father, and stood by the River Mole: Here he stay'd till he was Ten Years old, and was thence removed to *Utica* in Normandy, where at Eleven he received the first Tonsure, and was called *Vitalis*, because it happened on that Saint's Day; at Sixteen he was made Sub-deacon, at Eighteen Deacon, at Thirty three Priest, and so continued 34 Years, when he made an End of his History, which was in the Year 1141. *Odelirius*, his Father, was a great Friend of *Roger de Montgomery*, who was Earl of Shrewsbury; and it was at his Exhortation, and by his Assistance, that *Roger* built and endowed this Monastery in 1083, and fetched his Monks from *Sais* in Normandy to fill it. In this Monastery *Odelirius* lived and died a Monk himself in 1101, and so did a Son of his, and Brother to *Ordericus*. These are the Reasons why *Ordericus* is so very particular in his Description and Account of this Monastery above any other Writer we have; it was his native Country, he went to School in the very Church, that was afterwards turned into a Monastery of *Benedictines*; his Father and Brother were Monks in it, and doubtless many of his Relations lived about and near the Place. It is to him (and, for



any thing I have yet seen, to him alone) that we owe the Knowledge of this Foundation, and of the first Abbots of it, and of other private Occurrences relating to this Place. It is he who in the Year 1138 (the very Year of the pretended Translation of *Wenefrede's Bones*) tell us, that *William Fitzalan, Municipi & Vicecomes Scrobeshuriae*, who married *Robert* the Earl of Gloucester's Daughter, rebelled against King *Stephen*, and held *Shrewsbury* against him for a whole Month; but that at last the King took it in *August*: And yet this *Ordericus*, as zealous a Monk as *Robert*, but a better Historian, says not one Word of *Wenefrede's* Translation, though he has Occasion to mention the Transactions of the very Year in which it was done, in the very Town where it was done; nay, he continues his History three Year or four lower, and yet says nothing of it. This makes me suspect *Robert's* Credit a little in his Story of the Translation: For although Silence is not a sure Foundation to build an Argument upon, either for or against a Fact, yet I assure the Reader, that the Silence of a Monk in the Case of a Saint's Translation to a Monastery much favoured by him, is clear another thing than the Silence of other Historians in other Cases.

In the MS. Life of Sir *J. Ware*, the Translation is said to have been in *Tempore Regis Henrici*; and if he means *Henry* the Second, I should sooner incline to believe it; but it is not worth the while to give Reasons for either Opinion. *Robert* is not an Historian whom one would be at any Pains to discredit, if good People were not moved by his Authority to go on Pilgrimage to a Saint of his making.

„ His Sincerity is much commended by Card. *Baronius*, „ *Surius*, *Pitts*, and *Possevinus*.

I assure the Reader that none of these People say one Word or Syllable of the Sincerity of Prior *Robert*; not one of them ever saw his Book. Whatever *Pitts* says is transcribed from *Leland* or *Bale*, with a little Change of Words, and generally for the worse. *Surius* gives us a short Life of *Wenefrede*, but it is but an Abbreviation of *Capgrave*. *Possevinus* says, He was a Briton, a Monk, and wrote the Life of *Wenefrede*, and lived about 1140. Card. *Baronius* says nothing at all of him; but in his Notes on the *Roman Martyrology*, on Nov. 3, tells us, That he had heard great Matters of *Wenefrede's* Well, and the Miracles done there, from *Thomas Goldwell* the Bishop of *St. Asaph* himself, who was an Eye-witness, and worthy of all Credit; but not a Word of *Robert*. I wish the Popish Readers would learn a little to distrust the Relations and Histories which their Priests put into their Hands, and be now and then at the Pains to examine whether the Facts and Accounts they give of Matters be so as they represent them

or no. The new Editor of this Life of St. *Wenefrede* in 1712, does but transcribe this Passage from the Publisher of her Life in 1635, but he does not do it honestly neither; for the Passage there is, That Robert was, for his great Sincerity, by Card. Baronius, Surinus, CAPGRAVE, Pits, Posservinus, and others, worthily commended. Capgrave, it seems, was not thought a Name, of so good Credit as the rest, and therefore in this New Edition is left out; but, after all, he was the only Man of all the Company that ever saw the Life of *Wenefrede* written by Robert; and it is from his Abbreviation of her Life, that all the rest of the Writers speak: Even *Alford* himself, and *Cressy*, his Translator, knew nothing of Robert, but what they found in Capgrave, though both of them wrote after the Jesuit J. F. published her Life in English from a Copy of Robert of Shrewsbury in 1635.

„ It was penned by him in Latin, and dedicated by  
 „ him to Guarinus Prior of Worcester, both being of the  
 „ Holy Order of glorious Benedict. He tells Guarinus,  
 „ That what he presents him with, is from the ancient and  
 „ undoubted Monuments and Records of such Monasteries and  
 „ Churches as the Virgin is known to have lived in; as also  
 „ from the Depositions of venerable Priests, worthy of all  
 „ Credit for their Religious Profession, Sanctity of Life, and  
 „ great Learning.

The Life of *Wenefrede* written by Robert Prior of Shrewsbury, is directed to one Guarinus or Warinus, and such a one was Prior of Worcester between the Years 1130 and 1140, who were both Benedictines. So far is true; but that which follows is not true, viz. that Robert tells Guarinus, That what he presents him with is from ancient and undoubted Manuscripts and Records of such Monasteries and Churches as the Virgin is known to have lived in. This is indeed what the Jesuit J. F. makes Robert say to Guarin in his pretended Translation of him; and this is what the New Editor in 1712 transcribes from J. F. and puts upon his poor Pilgrims; but Robert says no such thing: His Words are these, *Partim per Scedulas in Ecclesiâ Patriâ, in qua deguisse disciscitur, collegi: partim quorundam Sacerdotum relationibus addidici, quos & Antiquitas veneranda commendabat, & quorum verba fidem adhibere ipse Religionis habitus compellebat:* In English thus; The Life of the Blessed Virgin *Wenefrede*, which I have lately made and sent to you, I have partly collected from the scattered Accounts I found in Writing in the several Churches of the Country, in which she is known to have conversed and lived; and partly learn'd from the Relations of sundry Priests, whose venerable Age recommended them to me, and whose very Garb and Habit constrained me to believe what they said. This is Robert's Account of the Materials out of which

which he composed his Work, and how he came by them: which, in my Opinion, falls very short of *ancient and undoubted Monuments*; nor is there one Word about *Monasteries*, nor any thing to signify the *Sanctity of Life*, or *great Learning* of the Priests, his Informers and Instructors. They might be very holy, and learned too, according to the Times; but Robert does not tell us so. Those are the Flourishes of J. F. the Jesuit, who thought a bare Translation of the Words of his Author would not make so much for the Credit of his Work as he believed it ought to have: But this is what I would have the Popish Readers now and then complain of to their Priests, and tell them that the Protestants take notice of their Want of Honesty and good Faith in Matters of this sort. Whatever Robert's Sincerity might be in writing this Life, I assure the Reader, the Translator has not shewn any great Marks of his own; for besides what I have already taken notice of, he has made other Additions even in the Author's Dedication-Epistle, which are not in the Original. Robert tells Guarinus, that the second Motive to his writing the Life was the Love he bore to the Virgin; That her great Merits being set forth, due Honour might be paid her by the Faithful. *Secundario, Virginis amor, qua declaratu ipsius meritis, honor et debitus a Fidelibus impenderetur.* This was too poor and modest for the Jesuit: He translates it thus; The second was my especial Love and Devotion to this most renowned Virgin and Martyr of our Country, that by her Sanctity and great Merits, here by me declared, she might by faithful Souls be the more devoutly honoured, served, and prayed unto. He also translates *Veridicorum assertione contestata*, by certain and undoubted Relations; the Word *Vitam* by eminent Sanctity and Graces. Now this is not to translate another's Words, but to write one's own Sense; and yet the Popish Readers are made to believe that Robert wrote these things 500 Years since, whereas in truth it was J. F. the Jesuit that wrote them in 1635, and I know not who that published them again in 1713. But before I leave this Head, I desire the Reader to consider whether this had not been a most proper Place for Robert to have told us, That he had collected some of his Materials from the Accounts that Elerius left, had he heard of any such Writings?

„ That Robert omits what is less certain, as her Journey  
 „ to Rome, and other Passages, not sufficiently attested.  
 „ So nice and scrupulous was the good Prior, not to re-  
 „ commend any thing to Posterity, which was not uncon-  
 „ troublable Matter of Fact.

Robert says, he purposely left out her Journey to Rome, and other common Stories that went about concerning *Wenefrede*, because he found them in no Books, nor handed about by any

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People whom he could trust. He had not therefore seen the Life of *Wenefrede*, above-mentioned, written by a nameless Author, which says she went to Rome—*Romam, ut memorant, petiit, visitandi Causa Sanctorum Apostolorum loco*. And who can tell us, why a Man should scruple to believe she made a Journey to Rome, who firmly believed that she lived at least fifteen Years, after her Head was cut off, and set on again? This, I fear, is straining at Gnats, and swallowing Camels. When once a Woman's Head is cut off, and right set on again, she will as easily go from *Wales* to Rome, as from *Holy-well* to *Guthelin*. I ask the Reader's Pardon for this Levity; but it would raise a Man's Indignation or Contempt, to see such as call themselves the *Priests of the most high God*, telling the most ridiculous Stories, with a very grave and serious Air; talking about the *Scruples* of legendary Writers; and giving us for a *true History*, a Relation that is not quite so well attested, and authentical as the History of *Guy of Warwick* is.

„ 'Tis true, he ought to have observed the Rules of an  
 „ exact Historian, as to the Years of her Life, Death, and  
 „ Translation, which he omitted. However, out of o-  
 „ ther Classical Authors, I set down the Centuries.

The Truth of it is, *Roberts* might as well have set down the Years of her Birth, Beheading, Removal from one Place to another, and the Time of her second Death, with as much Certainty as any thing else he relates, for he knew them all alike, But it seems, that neither the *Schedula* nor the living *Priests*, had told him any thing about the Time of her Life, or first, or second Death. But I rather think, he was wise enough to be afraid of naming Years, and Kings Reigns, which might be examined into, and if not well ascertained, bring some Discredit on his History. In this he shewed himself as skilful a Writer, as any I have seen, of the like Sort; for, in a Life of so great Length as this is, (containing 30 or 40 Pages in a small *Folio*, written in a good legible Hand) you will not meet with one Word, or Hint, from whence you can guess when *Wenefrede* lived or died. This I do not think was an Omission in *Robert*, but a wise and artful Concealment, and done with Design. However, the new Editor is resolved to supply this Defect, and to set down the *Centuries*, and that out of *Classical* Authors too, the meaning of which, I confess, I do not comprehend, having, ever since I was at School, understood that Word otherwise.

„ To proceed with greater Security, I also take for my  
 „ Guide, that learned Antiquary, and accurate Annalist,  
 „ the R. F. *Michael Alford*, S. J. who in his 2d Tome,  
 „ printed 1663, treats at large this Subject. Al-

*Alford* does indeed give us the Life of *Wenfred* at large, and makes many Observations, to his Purpose, as he goes along upon it; but still it is the Life that *Capgrave* gives us; for he had never seen the Life that was written by *Robert*. He takes it indeed for the Life that was written by *Robert*, and so far he is in the Right; for *Capgrave* abbreviated *Robert's* Life, and put it into his *Legend of English Saints*; and *F. Alford* is so ingenuous, as to cite it, — *Robert's* *Salop*, *apud Capgrave*; and *Robertus Abbas*, ut cum refert *Capgravius*: Which makes it evident, that he had not, at that Time, seen the original Life written by *Robert*, which is four Times bigger than the Abbreviation.

„ I likewise read attentively the Church-History of the  
 „ *R. F. Serenus Cressy*, set forth in 1668; who in the  
 „ Preface, acquaints the Reader, that altho' great Part  
 „ of his Volume is owing to *F. Alford*, he has other an-  
 „ cient Records to assist him, in carrying on the Work.  
 „ This religious Author being of the holy Order of St.  
 „ *Benedict*, I rationally supposed that he might have such  
 „ Manuscripts in Custody, as came not to the Knowledge  
 „ of other Writers, which possibly had been secured by  
 „ the Body, at the Dissolution of Monasteries. Neither  
 „ of them vary as to the Relation of her Life and Death,  
 „ they only differ in a Name or two, viz. *Trebuish* for  
 „ *Thewish*, and *Caradgens* for *Cradocus*, who imbrued his  
 „ Hands in the holy Virgin's sacred Blood.

*Cressy's* Church-History is a very poor Work, undertaken for the Sake of the *English* Readers, and to serve instead of the old *Legendary*, which was grown a little out of Fashion; but it has little or nothing in it, which is not translated from *F. Alford*; and of the Story of *Wenfred* he says nothing (because he knew nothing) but what the *Jesuit* had said before. As for the *Benedictines* having secured any considerable Manuscripts, at the Dissolution of Monasteries, 'tis a fancy that has run in many Peoples Heads, but without any good Grounds. The *Protestants* would be as glad as themselves, that they had so done; but since 150 Years have produced little or nothing of that Kind from these *Fathers*, we must, I doubt, be content with what we have at home. As to the exact Agreement betwixt those two Writers, it will easily happen, when one of them translates from the other; and if they had differed in more material Points than those mentioned, it had been no great Matter, for they tell but one and the same silly Story, from one and the same Legend.

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„ Doubtless you will observe, that this Edition of St. *Winefride's* Life, is rather to be look'd upon as a Re-impression, with some Amendments of the former Book, set forth in the Year 1635, by J. F. of the Society of *Jesuit*; which he translated from a very ancient (as he declares) and *authenticall* Manuscript of Robert Prior of Shrewsbury.

'Tis better, I think, to hear what J. F. says himself in his Preface, — *Whose* Book (meaning Robert's) copied truly out of an old *authenticall* Manuscript, I have here, in Sense, faithfully translated; so that J. F. translated from a Copy, not from an *authenticall* Manuscript it self. But that which is more to the Purpose to observe, is, that he tells us he translated Robert's Book, in Sense; i. e. he did not translate it according to the Letter, because he says, *The Author's old Phrases were scarcely expressible in good English*. I must own, that it is very hard to translate an old *Latin* Legend, into good, or into tolerable English; and therefore many times we must be content with the Sense of the Writer, where his Words cannot be well turned; but then, in all these Cases, an honest Man will be oblig'd to vary, as little as is possible, from the Sense which the Words give most naturally. The Translation of J. F. the result is, in this Respect, very faulty; He varies when there is no Manner of Need; and when the Words are plain, and might be very literally translated. His Translation is not much above Half what it would have been, had he translated it literally, so that he has left out a great deal; and in other Places he has added things of his own Head, which his Author thought not of; and I am confident there is not a Chapter in the whole Book, where he has not translated something very wrong, and made either more or less of it, than the Author intended. Whoever will be at the Pains to compare the *Latin* with the *English*, will wonder, as I do, that he should say, *He had faithfully translated Robert, in Sense*. I have given a Specimen of his Fidelity in the Preface, and it is really so, more or less, throughout the whole Work. And yet, after all, his Book may much more properly be called a Translation of Robertus Salopiensis, than the new Edition of *Winefride's* Life put out in 1712, can be called a Re-impression of J. F. the *Jesuit's* Book; for the latter is exceedingly unlike the former.

„ The two first Letters of his Name, and Calculation of the Time, when F. Alford lived, brings to my Thoughts, that very probably it was he who englished

„ It : For *Cressy* tells me in his Preface, that altho' he  
 „ published his *Tomes* under the borrowed Name of  
 „ *Alford*, *alias Griffith*, his real Paternal Name was *John*  
 „ *Flood*.

F. *Alford* was born in 1583, and died in 1633, and might  
 therefore very well translate *Robertus* in 1633, and put it out  
 under the Name of J. F. But I have this Objection against  
 it, that J. F. translated *Robertus Salopiensis*, and therefore saw,  
 and had that Book in his Hands; whereas it appears that F.  
*Alford* never saw *Robertus's* Life, but cites it out of *Capgrave*;  
 and yet he lived 18 Years after the Year 1633, in all which  
 Time he might have amended that Passage, and very probably  
 would have taken Notice of *Robert's* History of the Transla-  
 tion of *St. Wenefreth's* Bones to *Shrewsbury*, which he mentions  
 in his *Annals* of 1198, but mentions out of *Capgrave* still,  
 who has but a Line or two about it. This makes me conclude  
 that J. F. was not M. *Alford*.

„ I owe so much Deference to the Memory of this learn-  
 „ ed Man, whose Merits are known by his elaborate  
 „ Works, and who had the Perusal of the most ancient  
 „ Records of *Britain*, that you will find little more than  
 „ the Substance of your former Book: Yet must have  
 „ Leave to say, that the English of it is so obsolete, and  
 „ the tacking of the Words together, so much differing  
 „ from the present way of Writing, that most People de-  
 „ sired it might appear something more polished. I may  
 „ add, that 'tis a difficult Matter to procure a Copy; and  
 „ on this Account, those devoted to our sacred Patroness,  
 „ languished after a fresh Supply from the Press.

I have no Purpose to detract any thing from the Praise of  
 F. *Alford*, (who is here taken to be J. F.) I have a Respect for  
 all Men who endeavour to do what Honour and Service they  
 can to their native Country. His 4 Volumes of *Annals*, are  
 not generally had in that Esteem, that I think they deserve;  
 his Industry and Diligence are very great, and his Method is  
 very easy and useful. As to the new Edition of J. F.'s Book,  
 I know not how it can be called so; it is by no Means the  
 same Book: It treats of the same Subject, but in a very diffe-  
 rent Manner; some things are left out, and others are put in,  
 and the Language much altered, but whether it be mended by  
 polishing, I will not determine; Plain English, after all, is the  
 best Language, and will live longest; but plain English is  
 not very fit for a religious Romance; and I take those People  
 who languish after a new and polished Edition of *St. Wenefreth's*  
*Life*.



*fred's* Life, to be Lovers of *strange Stories*. But, in good Earnest, how can any serious Christians call St. *Wenefrede*, our *so-  
cred Patroness*? This is Language proper for the History of the *Seven Champions*, where St. *George* is for *England*, St. *Andrew* for *Scotland*, St. *James* for *Spain*, &c. Countries in which they never set their Foot. But is it thus, that St. *Wenefrede* is *Pa-  
troness of Wales*? I doubt it is a much more serious and religi-  
ous Matter; and of this I say that serious Christians ought to  
be ashamed. My Opinion is, that there are no such *Patrons*,  
or *Patronesses*, appointed by God, over several Countries; or  
that take, of their own Accord, the Care of such a Nation,  
Region, City, Town, or District, in particular. But should  
I ever fall into this superstitious Doctrin, and grow fond of any  
Saint's particular Protection, (either distrustful that of God,  
or, through a false Humility, not daring to approach His  
Throne immediately my self) I hope I should have the good  
Sense and Discretion left me, to choose a *Saint*, of whose *Being*,  
and *Grace*, and *Virtue*, and *Religion*, I might rest as well assur-  
ed, as I am that there is any such Place of Happiness as *Hea-  
ven*, or any *Saint* therein. I would choose the blessed *Virgin*,  
or an *Apostle*, or some old and celebrated Saint and Martyr,  
*Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, or *Cyprian*, or some such one, as all the  
World agreed in honouring for their holy Life and Death. I  
would not choose such a *Saint* as *Wenefrede*, of whose very  
*Being*, there is no manner of Certainty left to us. I would  
not pray to one, of whom I find no Mention made for full  
500 Years, after the Time wherein she is said to have lived.  
I would not go on a Pilgrimage to a *Saint's Well*, whose *Histo-  
ry* is only told by a *poor Monk*, that lived so long after her as  
300 Years, and brings no one Writer of Name or Credit to  
vouch for any thing he says concerning her, all that Interim,  
except a few loose Scraps of Paper or Parchment, in the  
Church Chest, or the Relations of some honest old Priests,  
who told him what the Stories of the Country were about  
her. Such a Tradition as this, is not Ground sufficient for a  
Christian to build a *Patronage* upon. Were I a Papist, I would  
not have a *Patroness* of *Prion Robert's* making, who, by being  
so much concerned to profit his Monastery at *Salop*, by bring-  
ing thither the Bones of *Wenefrede*, and thereby more *Compa-  
ny*, and thereby more Offerings, might possibly be tempted to  
say things of her, that were not exactly true. But I would  
ask for as good Vouchers, and authentick Writers to testify  
the Time she lived in, the Place she converted in, the Death  
she suffered, the setting her Head again upon her Shoulders,  
and the second natural Death she underwent, as we have for  
other Saints, who are honoured without Dispute, and of whose  
Gifts and Graces no one doubts, nor makes any Question, ei-  
ther of their Life or Death. When a Saint is the *Patroness* of  
a Country, ought not the Country to have all the Certainty and  
Satisfaction

Satisfaction that is possible, *whether, when, and how* that Saint lived and died? But *Walsley* can never have this Certainty and Satisfaction of its Patroness, if *Wynfrid* be she, because there is no Author either in Manuscript, or in Print, who lived within 500 Years of her Time, that does so much as name her Name, or say a Word about her. But this I have shewn at large, in a Chapter of Notes, upon her Life; and I only mention it here, to put the poor *Pilgrims* in Mind, how ill they are used, and how their Priests impose upon their Understanding, when they send them, so many Miles, to pray to one of whose Existence, Life, and Death, they neither have, nor can have, any Certainty. I do not pretend, in this Place, to dispute whether it be fit for Christians to choose their Patrons in Heaven, to pray to Saints, and go in Pilgrimages to their Shrines; but I say, if all these things were lawful and allowed, nay good and profitable, yet would it be a foolish and unreasonable thing, to pitch upon a Name, and place her as a Saint in Heaven, whom I have no sufficient Reason to believe ever to have lived upon the Earth, or, if she lived at all, that she lived in the Fear of God, and died in his Favour; of whom, in a Word, I know no more, than what a Monk hath told me, in a most miserable Account of her.

I have kept my self so close to the historical Part, that altho' frequent Opportunities invited to enlarge, I absolutely refused to make any Additions of my own. I have rather abbreviated when I concluded some Periods, not very material, and this to lessen Bulk. A few Occurrences are reduced to proper Places, and some Passages are added out of holy Scripture, to set in a true Light the Virtues of *St. Wynfrid* and others.

The Editor of this new Life is well assured, that there are not ten People in all the Queen's Dominions that can or will compare his Book with the Life written by *Robt. Sale*; nor many more that will compare it with the pretended Translation of *St. Bede*, put out in 1611. But I, who have read them all, (and many more of this bad Kind) can assure the Reader that the Additions, Abbreviations, Omissions, and Changes made by this new Editor, have made it a very different Book, from either of the others; and if I may speak my Mind freely, as I do it, without Contempt or Ill-will, I profess seriously that *Robt's* Book is by much the best, considering who he was, and when he lived, the most excusable of all the three. As to the Passages of holy Scripture, which are here added, they are, I confess, so needless, and so oddly applied, that with there no better Use to be made of them, I should be inclined

non est in eadem sententia.

to think, with the Papists, that the People were not much injured, in being debarred from reading them.

„ What is said of St. Bruno's Nobility, I relate out of „ an unquestionable Manuscript.

He should have told us of what Authority his Manuscript was, for I have procured a Copy of Bruno's Life, from an unquestionable MS. in which his Nobility is a little otherwise derived, than it seems to be in his; and till I know the contrary, I shall take mine to be the more authentical: But I submit it to the Reader, to judge if any Descent can be greater than that which follows.

*Saint BRUNO's Pedigree.*

Bruno the Son of Bugu, the Son of Gwynllw, the Son of Tegid, the Son of Cadell Drynlluc, the Son of Casagyrn, the Son of Gorthreyran, the Son of Gorthegyrn, the Son of Kyllagyrn, the Son of Debeuwyn, the Son of Eudegan, the Son of Euddegem, the Son of Elud, the Son of Euder, the Son of Eudolen, the Son of Afallach, the Son of Amalech, the Son of Belym, the Son of Anna, the Mother of that Anna that was Cozen German to the Virgin Mary the Mother of Christ.

Thus is Bruno's Nobility unquestionable by any reasonable Man, confirmed by two such Manuscripts. I have printed his Life, at the End, that the Reader might see, that Bruno and Wenefrede were not only nearly allied, (as this new Life tells us) but that there were many concordant Passages and Accidents in their Lives; or, at least, that they who wrote their Legends thought so: And I shall be obliged to any learned Popish Priest, who will tell me, why Bruno's Life is not as credible, in all its Parts, as that of Wenefrede.

„ And I presumed, that the Supplement of a few late „ Miracles would add Fuel to the Fire of Devotion.

A true undoubted Miracle, and well attested, is of great Force and Efficacy, both to beget, confirm, and increase Faith and Devotion; but monstrous Stories, and impertinent Relations, beget Contempt of Miracles, and prejudice the Christian Faith exceedingly:

„ You'll find me faithful to the Author; my only Ap- „ prehension is, that I have been deficient in the Saint's „ due Praises.

'Tis



'Tis impossible to be faithful to *Robertus Salupiensis*, and at the same time to be deficient in the Praises of his Saint *Wenefrede*. My Opinion is, however, that the Author of this New Life has been neither faithful to the one, nor deficient to the other.

Some perchance may think I am too liberal in the Elogium; for we are fallen into an Age of Infidelity, and we are dreadfully over-run with *Deists*, I wish not with *Atheists* too, who sap the very Foundations of Revealed Religion, and allow equal Credit to the *Alcoran* and *Talmud* they do to the Old and New Testament. Such as will not believe that the Rod of *Aaron* commanded Streams from a dry Rock, or that *Lazarus* rotting in his Tomb returned to Life, will droll upon *St. Wenefrede's* Well, and her *Resuscitation*. As if there were no Mean between too credulous a Belief, and the Madness of believing nothing at all, when shocking our wild Fancy, though back'd with the strongest Evidence of Humane Authority.

That there are *Atheists* in the Kingdom I have Reason to believe, and *Deists* in much greater Number; but that this wicked Number is so prodigiously great at present, and so exceedingly increased within these few Years, is what I cannot easily allow; although it is so much the common Cry, that not to fall in with it is enough to make one pass for one of that bad Number with many People. But I know that it has served the Purpose of some designing Men so well, to have the Date of the Growth of Infidelity fixed to, or about the Time of the late Revolution; that I very much suspect the Truth of the Fact upon that very Account; nor do I at all wonder that the *Papist* Party does so readily chime in with that, and all other Cries that tend to the depreciating that great *Deliverance*, that might have proved so fatal to their Interest. And yet, of all Men living, none can declaim against the *Atheists* and the *Deists* increasing in England with a worse Grace, or can be less in Earnest, than the *Papist* Priests, as well because it is, as it were, the Rain and Sunshine that procures them the more plentiful Harvest; as also, that nothing in the World does more naturally beget, promote and increase Contempt of all *Revealed Religion*, than the seeing the grossest Corruptions of *Papery* pretend to stand upon the same Bottom, claiming the same Sanction and Authority, and requiring the same Belief, and Reverence, and Obedience with the most plain and undisputed Articles of our common Christian Faith, and our most necessary Duties. This is too large a Field to enter on in general; but who would not



be tempted to believe the Fables in the *Talmud* and the *Alcoran*, are full as credible as the Relations of the Old and New Testament, if the Story of *Wensfred's* Head being set on again, and of the springing of her *Well* just in that Place and Time, and all the Miracles related of her, must be told with the same Assurance, believed with the same Faith, entertained with the same Certainty, and compared with the Relations of *Moses's* striking the Rock, and the Waters flowing thereupon, and with our Saviour's raising *Lazarus* from the Dead? If *Robert of Saprop's* History be of equal Credit and Authority with the Accounts of *Moses* and *St. John*, it will not be in any Body's Power to make the Credit of the Old and New Testament greater than that of the *Talmud* and the *Alcoran*; because the *Talmud* and the *Alcoran* are certainly of equal Credit with the Life and Death of *Wensfred*. Such as will not believe the Miracles of the Old and New Testament, will droll upon *Wensfred's* Well and her *Resuscitation*; no doubt of it: But they who disbelieve the latter, will not necessarily disbelieve the former, unless you tell them that they stand upon the same Bottom, and have the same Authority. If the Story of *Wensfred* be as well attested as the Account of *Lazarus*, they will deserve and have the same Credit. But he who tells me this, and tells me at the same time, that the Story of *Wensfred* depends upon the Credit of *Prior Robert*, tells me (in Truth and in Effect) that *St. John* is of no more Authority: And I would fain know who it is, in this Case, that saps the Foundations of Revealed Religion? who it is that brings the Miracles of the Old and New Testament into Contempt or Disesteem? But, to save himself from these Consequences, he tells us, *There is a Mean betwixt believing too much, and believing nothing, though back'd with the strongest Evidence of Humane Authority.* There is a Mean betwixt these two Extreams without doubt; but then he should have told us what Parts of this *Admirable Life* we were obliged to believe; which were most credible, which *less*, which *not at all*. Now this is not the Case of Scripture-Histories, which are *intirely* to be credited; and no one Part of the Relation more than another, and therefore are not, in my Opinion, without Impiety, to be compared with any *Legendary Stories*.

„ Others, by the Misfortune of Education (whom I  
„ truly compassionate) will be something out of Humour  
„ when they find undoubted Miracles in that Church,  
„ which they reject.

No considering Man either does or can deny, that God may work Miracles, *whenever, wherever, and by whomsoever* he pleases. He has certainly wrought them by *Jews*, by *Gentiles*, and by *Christians*; and he may do so still, if he please. I do not

not doubt but that he does at this Day, according as his Wisdom and his Goodness leads him, work many Miracles among the *Turks*, the *Perfians*, and the *Moor*s, the *Indians*, and the *Han* *shan* of all Sorts; and with the *Protestants* as well as *Papists*. And why then should a Protestant be out of Humour to find undoubted Miracles in the Church of *Rome*? A Protestant would neither turn Turk, nor Jew, nor *Gentile*, though he should see that God wrought Miracles among them; and why should he turn *Papist* on the like Account? I believe he may safely do it, whenever he sees undoubted Miracles wrought by God, on purpose to attest the Truth of any Point of *true Popery*, in which the Two Religions differ: But there is no Reason why a Protestant should turn *Papist*, because Miracles are wrought amongst *Papists*, (if you will take their Word for it) because they may be wrought to attest the Truth of *Common Christianity*, or for some other good Purpose of God, that has no Relation to the Points in Controversy. But what which this *New Editor* means by this, is, that Protestants will be out of Humour to find undoubted Miracles wrought by *Wenefrede*, who was of the Church of *Rome*. But I believe there will not be many Protestants out of Humour upon this Account, because I think there will be no undoubted Proofs; 1. That ever there was such a Woman in Being; nor, 2. That she was of the Church of *Rome*; nor, 3. That she ever wrought any undoubted Miracles, either living or dead.

„ How the primitive Pastors, as *St. Beuno*, whose Feast is celebrated on the 14th of January, and *St. Elerius* on the 13th of June, exhorted Rich, Noble, and Beautiful Virgins to renounce the World, and to consecrate themselves wholly to their Blessed Redeemer by religious Vows.

I am very well assured that Men of more Authority and Worth, and of much greater Antiquity, than *Beuno* and *Elerius*, have, in their Exhortations to *Virginity*, said so many strange, exalted, hyperbolical Things in Commendation of that State, which was never appointed or commanded of God, and to the Derogation of the Sanctity of *Marriage*, which was instituted by God in the Times of Man's Innocence, and under the Reputation of whose Holiness our Saviour was himself born (alsho' it was impossible he should have any other Father but God) that I am sure they can neither answer it to God, or to their own Parents; and therefore that *Beuno* and *Elerius* should do the same, is no Wonder at all, if ever there were any such Exhortations made by them. But indeed I am not satisfied that we have any good Proofs of any thing but their Names left us, and I say the same thing of them that I say of *Wenefrede*, that

that no Author has so much as named their Names that lived 500 Years within the Time assigned for their living. And I believe it is the good Prior of Shrewsbury that must vouch for them all, or my Anonymous Writer, who yet says nothing of Elerius. And in Affirmance of my Opinion, I have transcribed an old British Calendarium out of the Cotton-Library above 500 Years old. It is in Vespas. A. 14. and the Title is, *De Sanctis Wallicis Calendarium*. St. Bernard is in it, by which we know it cannot be older than 1153, when he died, or about ten Years after, when he was Canonized. Now in this Calendarium of Welch Saints in particular, and written after Robert had written the Life of Wenefrede, there are no such Names as Wenefrede, as Bruno, or Elerius; to be found in it; which is a kind of Demonstration that these three Names were not at that Time in any great Repute for Sanctity, or working Miracles.

„ How on this Account St. Wenefrede offered herself a  
 „ Sacrifice to preserve her vowed Virginity, which pure  
 „ Oblation was so acceptable to God, that he recompenced  
 „ it with such a stupendous Miracle, as neither the prece-  
 „ dent (says Cressy) nor subsequent Ages of the Church  
 „ (save that at St. Paul's Decollation) could afford one to  
 „ equal it.

Never was so ridiculous a Legend founded on so weak a Bottom. Take the whole Story for a certain Truth. A young Prince one Sunday Morning comes to a Lord's House, and finds his only Daughter all alone, and immediately falls in Love with her, and tells her, If she will but lie with him, he will certainly marry her afterwards, and make her a Princess. She being virtuously disposed, and having vowed to be a Nun, makes her Excuse at present, and tells him she will wait upon his Highness by and by, when she is better prepared for his Reception; and under this Pretence gets out at a Back-Door, and runs as fast as she can towards the Church, in Hopes she might be there secure from his Attempts: The Prince immediately pursues and overtakes her e'er she could get thither, and asking her once more if she would yield to his Desires; and being told she was already engaged to Christ, and could not possibly do it, he was so enraged, that he drew out his Sword, and cut her Head off presently. Now, I desire to know, where is the extraordinary Merit of this Virgin in all this Matter? Can one reasonably suppose, that there is any one honest Maid in all Flyntshire that would not do as much as Wenefrede did to avoid a furious Ravisher, and save her Virtue? and that too for very Honesty's Sake, without the Obligation of a Vow to become a veiled Nun? I have no great Opinion of the Virtue of this Author's Devout Pilgrims, as if it were any ways beyond of



above the Virtue of those who stay at home; but yet I hope that not a single one of all those tender Virgins who tremble at a Northern Blast; yet sink with such Alacrity under the Waters of Holy-well, would behave herself any worse than *Wenefrede* here did; she would, I hope, reject with Scorn so scandalous and wicked a Proffer, made by a Man of little better Quality than herself, and that at the first Visit too. I hope she would make as good Excuses for Delay, and get away as fast as she could from him; and should he overtake her in the Common, or the Street, and tempt her there again, I hope she would have the Virtue to refuse him, and endure the utmost that he in his wicked Rage could do to her. Yet this is all that *Wenefrede* is said to have done, taking good *Father Robert's* Word for the Truth of all that passed. This is the Virtue, this the Merit, this the pure Oblation, that was so acceptable to God, that he must work so stupendous a Miracle to recompence it, that no Age past, or to come, could afford one equal to it, excepting that at the Beheading of *St. Paul*; the Veins of whose Head and Neck did not, it seems, bleed Blood, but Milk; and whose Head, when it was new cut off, made three Leaps, in each of which Places immediately sprang up a Well of sweet Water. But with the Favour of *F. Cressy*, the Preference still is due to *Wenefrede*; for though three Springs are more than one, yet did the Head of *St. Paul* lie quiet at the last, and was not again united to its Neck, to live full fifteen Years afree (as useful a Head as it was) which was the Case of *Wenefrede*. And to shew I have no Prejudice to this, or any other British Saint, I assure the Reader I take the Story of this Rise of *Wenefrede's Well*, to be full as true as that of *St. Paul's Three Springs*. And I cannot tell whether I ought not to be ashamed to be found more knowing in these Matters than *F. Cressy*, who thinks *St. Wenefrede's* Case to be only equalled by that of *St. Paul*; whereas I know a great many Cases that are equal, if not superior to them both, if it would do any Good to produce them here; he who would see them may look into the Chapter of Miracles, or that of Waters.

These Men are unwilling to hear how *St. Beuno* despised his Hereditary Patrimony and Glory to become a poor Minister of the Gospel. How in the primitive Times the Holy Mass was offered to the Eternal Father, to apply the Fruits of our Redemption: How Sacred Reliques were honoured; and praying for the Faithful departed was practised, as *St. Elerius* confided *St. Wenefrede* would do for his Soul, he being of Opinion that she would survive him.

'Tis a common thing for the Writers of this low Kind, to mix and confound the Times of which they write with the Times in which they live; and in speaking of the former, to describe the Manners and the Customs of the latter. The Doctrines delivered by Robert in the Life of *Wenefrede* are certainly the Doctrines of Robert's Days; but it does not follow that they were the Doctrines of the Days when *Wenefrede* is supposed to have lived. I do not say they were not; but I say that Robert's Authority does not prove they were; that must be proved by Writers of that Age and Century. And yet this is the Fallacy that *M. Alford* would put upon his Readers; he would have them take for granted, that the Doctrines in the Life of *Wenefrede*, written 500 Years after, were the Doctrines of the British Church 500 Years before; which, were it really true, yet it is not to be proved in that manner to any one's Conviction. The Time allotted by *Alford*, *Cressy*, and those who follow them, to *St. Wenefrede's* Living, is about the Year 660. I know they have no good Grounds to go upon in assigning this rather than any other Time, for the Time in which she lived; for Robert is silent in the Matter, and after Robert comes nobody for above 400 Years, that pretends to tell us when she lived. But I dispute not when she lived, let it be in 660, as they pretend to guess; I only ask by what Figure those Times are called *Primitive Times*, and the Doctrines then in Fashion *Primitive Doctrines*? But, after all, why should he think a Protestant unwilling to hear that *Beuno* left a great Estate and all his Honour to become a poor Minister of the Gospel, when he is glad to hear that the Apostles forsook all and followed Christ, and reads, with Pleasure, that many rich and honourable Persons did the like in After-Ages? What Harm is this to a Protestant? As for offering the Holy Mass to the Eternal Father, to apply the Fruits of our Redemption, it is what I do not sufficiently understand, nor I believe this New Editor himself; but of this I am sure, that there is no such thing said in Robert's Life of *Wenefrede*: His Expressions are, the celebrating Mass, and celebrating the Divine Mysteries; and further he goes not. What Occasion has a Protestant to be disturbed at hearing that People of old honoured Reliques, when he himself would honour them, were he assured they were the Reliques of Christ's Saints and Martyrs? What a ridiculous Thing is it, to fancy that Protestants have not the same Curiosity, and the same Affections that Papists have in those Matters, could they believe they were not cheated in the Wares? They would not prostrate themselves before an old Shooe, though they were sure it were *St. Cyprian's*; they would not lift up Eyes or Hands to him in Prayer on that Account, nor rub any Beads upon it; they would do nothing silly, nothing superstitious to it, or before it; but I believe they would give Money for it, they would look often on it, consider its Shape, and Make, and Mat-

ter, preserve it carefully, and would not lose it for a considerable Price; and I know not whether they would not value it equally with his Foot. The Difference betwixt us is, that we are longer in believing such a Relique belonged to such a Saint than the Papists, and do not afterwards think it can work so great Miracles as they are apt to think. And, lastly, why should a Protestant be loth to believe, that *praying for the Faithful departed* was heretofore practised, (when he knows, if he be a Scholar) that some People did actually pray for the Virgin Mary and the Apostles, and other holy Men and Women, when they were sure, and owned that they were sure, they were in Heaven and happy? What is all this to the Purpose, unless it be made our Duty, and enjoined by God, or plain that it is useful to the Living and the Dead? Has not a Protestant as much natural Affection to his Relations, as much Kindness to his Friends, and as much Compassion to all Christians, as a Papist has? And what should keep him then from praying for such as departed this Life in a less safe Condition than he fears they should, but that he finds no manner of Ground in God's Word to believe that any thing we do can alter that Condition for the better? That since the Holy Ghost has said, that every Man must give an Account to God of his own Works, done in the Flesh, it would be strange that another's Prayers, or Alms, or Fastings, or Oblations, should atone, or be accepted for my Transgressions, when I am dead. All Men are willing to believe the things that make for their Security, their Ease, and Interest; and therefore Protestants can have no Prejudice against these Doctrines, but that they are persuaded there is neither Reason nor Revelation to support them. But, after all, *Elerius* does not say that *Wensfrede* should pray for him, when dead; he says he was glad that God had sent her to that Place, to bury him, when dead, *Meique Memoriam post Obicum meum habituram*, and to make honourable Mention of him after his Decease; for so he explains it afterwards, *Qui & me sepeliret, & hunc incolens Locum post me, celebrem illum faceret*, for which he said he had prayed to God: Not but that People did, in *Elerius's* supposed Time, pray for the Dead; and that *memoriam habere* does also signify to remember the Dead, by reading in the *Dypticks* the Names of the Deceased, as was the Custom of much elder Times; but it signifies here no more than remembering him, when dead, with Honour.

„ If these Christian Articles are to be set aside, and antiquated, by Consequence general Councils, canonized Doctors, and ancient Histories, must be suppressed and repealed, as delivering and encouraging the same primitive Doctrine.



Voluntary Vows of Poverty, honouring Reliques, and praying for the Dead, tho' they should all of them be innocent and allowable, yet might be safely laid aside, not only without Prejudice, but to the Advantage of Christianity. They are, at the best, great Snares, Occasions of many Errors, and the Foundation of a World of superstitious Practices; they help to fill the Monasteries and Nunneries, and furnish out Processions and fine Shows; and by feeding the Fire of Purgatory, they provide a good Income for the Priests. But Christ's Religion was compleat before these things were thought on; and so it would be, tho' all the Councils, Doctors, and ancient Histories that treat of these Articles, were at the Bottom of the Sea, never to rise again.

„ Quick-sighted *Alford* foresaw it expedient, if not necessary, to solve an Objection which some captious Criticks might glory in, viz. Why *V. Bede* makes no Mention of glorious *St. Wenefrede* in his History: He answers, That *Bede*, *Malmesbury*, *Huntington*, and other ancient Authors, who wrote at large of some Saints, are silent in the Praise of our *Virgin Martyr*, because they only recorded the Acts and Monuments of their respective Saints and Churches. *V. Bede* in particular declares he only designed to write the History of his own Nation, which was the *English Saxon*. Hence he makes no Mention of *St. Patrick*, *St. Ursula*, *David*, *Dubritius*, *Kentigern*, who were illustrious Lights of the British Church. *Alford* adds, that there being an irreconcilable Separation, betwixt the *Britains* and *Saxons*, not only as to Distance of Place, but likewise as to Tempers and Affections, all Manner of Commerce was interdicted; insomuch that *V. Bede*, who lived and died in the North of *England*, could not have such certain Knowledge of what passed in the West, as to insert it in his History.

I have, in the Chapter of Notes, urged this Objection farther than *Alford* could think fit to do, and considered his Answer so thoroughly, that I will say but little to it here, and refer the Reader to that Chapter, if he require more Satisfaction. *V. Bede*, as much a Stranger as he was to the British Affairs, and notwithstanding all the Enmity betwixt the Nations, yet wrote the History of *St. Alban*, and of *S. S. Julius*, and *Aaron*, who were *Britains*, and suffered at *Caerleon upon Usk*; and I believe, if ever he had heard of *Wenefrede*, he could not have forbore telling us her Story: So would *Stephen Heddus* his

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Contemporary in his Life of *Wilfrid* Archbishop of York, where he has often Occasion to talk of the *Britains*, whom he always calls *Schismaticks*, because they would not keep their *Easter* on the same Day with the *Romish* Church, nor make any use of the *Pope's* Barbers, but polled their Priests Heads by a Pattern of their own. I say the same thing of *W. Malmesbury*, *Huntington*, *Eshelward*, *Ingulfus*, *Florentius Wigorn*; of *Roger Hoveden*, *Roger of Wendover*, *Robert de Monte*; *Walter Hemingsford*, *Matthew Paris*, *Matthew Westminster*; and, in a Word, of all the Writers, good and bad, from *Bede* to *Ranulph Higden* a Monk of *Chester*, about the Year 1360. There is not one of them has so much as named her Name, till the last put her Story into 18 or 20 monkish Latin Rhymes, and gave it us, in a Poem, intitled *De Laudabilibus Wallie*. The Answer to all this is, it seems, that they were all of them *Anglo-Saxons*, ignorant or envious Writers, or who had something else to do, than to take any Notice of foreign Saints. But this will never pass upon any Man, who has ever read all, or any of these Authors: There is not one of them who would not have gone a hundred Miles, as it were, out of his Way, to have told the Story of *Wenefrede's* Head being set on again upon her Shoulders; not one of them who would not sooner have left out a whole King's Reign, than *Wenefrede's* Resuscitation, had he believed or heard of any such thing. You may be confident, therefore, that the utter Silence of each and all of these Historians, did not proceed from any Design, Spite, or national Pique, but from pure Ignorance of the Matter. That *Bede* makes no Mention of *St. Patrick*, *Dubrice*, *David*, and *Kentigern*, is indeed an Argument to me, (considering the Temper of the good Man) that he knew nothing of them. But supposing that he had heard of their great Virtues, and yet would make no Mention of Men or Things that were foreign to his History, (which yet is not his Way) does any one think it possible he should have concealed the Story of *Wenefrede*, had he known it? The rest of the Saints were very extraordinary Persons indeed, and famous in their Day, but not one of them had his Head cut off, and set on again, which makes you know a great Difference betwixt *St. Wenefrede* and them. But the Force of the Objection does not lie in the Silence of *P. Bede* alone, but in the Silence of all Writers whatsoever, that treat of our Affairs, not only *Anglo-Saxons*, but of *Nennius*, *Affer Menewensis*, *Jeffery of Monmouth*, *Caradoc of Llanarvan*, and of (one as good as all in this Point) *Giraldus Cambrensis*; who were all of them *Britains*, Historians, and very good Believers; of whom I have given an Account (as I said) in another Place, to which I must needs refer the Reader, if he be any ways scrupulous.

„ In this little Undertaking, I looked on my self as a  
 „ Debtor to the Unwise, as well as to the Wise ; therefore in  
 „ handling the Subject, I avoided all quaint and uncom-  
 „ mon Expressions, as might require Study in the Vulgar.  
 „ Plainness of Stile, without Theatre-dress, best becomes  
 „ those who write to inform and edify the meanest State  
 „ and Condition.

The Editor of this Book, if he were so before, is still a  
 Debtor to the Wise, for, surely, he has paid them nothing in it.  
 I am altogether of his Mind, that plain Language best becomes  
 those, whose Purpose it is to inform and edify plain People ;  
 but he who finds himself a Debtor to the Unwise, should also  
 think he ought to pay them with plain Truths, as well as plain  
 English ; and I am a little afraid that even the Pilgrims will not  
 go away much edified with this poor Story he has told them.

„ I will not detain you any longer (my dear devout  
 „ Pilgrims ;) yet before I take my Leave, I most hum-  
 „ bly and earnestly crave a charitable Remembrance at  
 „ the holy Well ; and I faithfully assure you of a grateful  
 „ Return. We are all of us Passengers in this World,  
 „ and no more than Strangers and Sojourners upon Earth.  
 „ Let us unite in Prayer, for a happy finishing of our  
 „ Journey, that after this mortal Pilgrimage, we may safe-  
 „ ly arrive at the glorious Fountain of eternal Life, where  
 „ we shall be inebriated with a Torrent of Pleasure,  
 „ rendring Thanks, loving and adoring our most merciful  
 „ and omnipotent God, World without End.

To this I have nothing to say, but a sincere Amen, as wish-  
 ing both the Author and his Pilgrims all true Happiness. But I  
 take this Opportunity, to desire the Reader not to censure me  
 too easily, as one who has taken too much Pains, and shewn  
 my self too much in Earnest, in confuting so poor a Story as  
 this of *Wenefrede*. *Holy-well* is a Fountain of great Superstiti-  
 on ; and as ridiculous and idle as the Fable may appear to Pro-  
 testants, it does not, as yet, appear so to the Papists : And it is  
 for their Sake and Service that I have taken the Pains these Ob-  
 servations cost me ; and for their Sake would take much great-  
 er, if I knew I could be useful to them, in so doing.

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In this little book, I look on my life as  
 a story to be told, and as the story of the world  
 in which I live. I have tried to tell it in a  
 simple and unassuming way, as it is in the  
 mind of the simple, and as it is in the  
 heart of the true. I have tried to tell it  
 in a way that will be true to the  
 whole who write to inform and tell the  
 world's story.

The Editor of this book, if he were to  
 look on it as a story, he would find it to be  
 a story of the world, and of the world  
 in which I live. I have tried to tell it  
 in a simple and unassuming way, as it is  
 in the mind of the simple, and as it is  
 in the heart of the true. I have tried to  
 tell it in a way that will be true to the  
 whole who write to inform and tell the  
 world's story.

I will not tell you any longer (my dear  
 friend) yet before I leave, I will tell  
 you and especially have a chapter. I have  
 tried to tell it in a simple and unassuming  
 way, as it is in the mind of the simple,  
 and as it is in the heart of the true. I  
 have tried to tell it in a way that will  
 be true to the whole who write to inform  
 and tell the world's story. I have tried  
 to tell it in a way that will be true to  
 the whole who write to inform and tell the  
 world's story.

To tell I have nothing to say, but I have  
 tried to tell it in a simple and unassuming  
 way, as it is in the mind of the simple,  
 and as it is in the heart of the true. I  
 have tried to tell it in a way that will  
 be true to the whole who write to inform  
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THE  
Life, Martyrdom, and Miracles  
OF

St. *WENEFRIDE*, &c.

**M**ANY are the evident Motives of *Credibility*, clearly distinguishing the unspotted Church of *Jesus Christ* from heterodox Persuasions, which are built on private Fancy, and for the most Part on Faction. Among the rest, consummate Sanctity, and undeniable Miracles, challenge their due Places. The holy *Apostles*, before they separated to promulge the Gospel thro' the Universe, in the Symbol of Faith, instructed future Ages, that the Spouse of *Christ*, purchased with the Effusion of his most sacred Blood, is holy; I believe in the holy *Catholic Church*.  
(a) Other Sects pretending to Religion, lean, or to speak more properly, lead on to agreeable Liberty, which powerfully invites and brings over vast Crowds of loose Protestants

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(a) 'Tis a new Thing to hear, that *Papists*, in great Crowds, turn *Protestants*, that they may live more loosely and more at large than they might have done in their own Communion: 'Twill hardly be believed by any one who knows how indulgent most of their Confessors are, and what Allowances they make. I fear that neither Side has much the Advantage in Reproaches of this Nature, as to *Practices*; but certainly the Principles and Rules of *Protestants* allow of no unlawful Liberties in any Kind whatever.



elytes. (b) As to Miracles, which set a Seal on the true Faith, the immortal Son of God hath assured us, that those who believe in him shall do greater Wonders than he wrought himself, St. John xiv. 12. The Life of St. Wenefride is very conspicuous, as to both these genuine Marks of Miracles and Sanctity; as it will more clearly appear by her wonderful Actions, and the several Steps by which she arrived at so high a State of Perfection.

In the seventh Age after Man's Redemption flourished many Saints of both Sexes. I shall only mention those chiefly concerned in this short History. (c) St. Beuno, the glorious Instrument of St. Wenefride's second Life and Sanctity, was born of noble Parents in *Montgomeryshire*, at

(b) It neither is nor can be literally true, that any one ever did greater Miracles than Christ did. The Apostles and first Disciples of Christ might work more Miracles than their Master, and their Miracles might convert more People to the Faith, and have a greater and a quicker Effect upon their Minds, than those which our Saviour wrought among the Jews. And in this Sense the Words were justified by the Event; the speedy Conversion of so great a Part of the World by so few Hands, in so short a Time, as both the Scriptures and other ancient Writers tell us was done, is a convincing Proof that the Servants were, in this Point, greater than their Master, and the Disciples than their Lord. But to imagine that any of them either did or could work greater Miracles than Christ did, in curing all Diseases by a Word, and in his Absence, and raising People from the Dead, and the like, is to imagine what no Man living can comprehend, and what no History, that can be credited, has ever given us any Instance or Example of. But for this I refer the Reader to *The Chapter of Miracles*, in which I have shewn, that this of St. John 14. 12. is one of those abused Texts that is laid as a Foundation for the most ridiculous and most absurd Legends in the World: And that I might not want an Instance of the Application of this Text to this bad Purpose, the present Book affords me one. The Miracles of St. Wenefride are, it seems, to convince us, that that Promise of our Saviour was made good in her great Works.

(c) See *The Life of St. Beuno*, at the End, translated from the British M. S. in *Jesus College, Oxon.* and which is certainly of equal Credit and Authority with *The Life of Wenefride*, and may be of great Use in fixing the Chronology of these Saints Lives, which is as yet somewhat doubtful.

## The Life of St. Wenefride.

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at the Fall of the River Rhyw into Sebern, therefore called *Aberhyw*. His Father *Binsi* descended lineally from *Cadell*, Prince of *Glefnwig*; and his Mother derived her Pedigree from *Anna*, (who was marry'd to the King of the *Picts*) Sister to the mighty and renowned King *Arthur* who departed happily this Life, and was interred at *Glastenbury*, in the Year 342. His Grandfather was *St. Gundeleins*, and he was near related to several eminent Saints; amongst the rest, he was Cousin German to *St. Kentegern*, Bishop of *Glasgow*, who, forc'd from *Scotland*, founded the Bishoprick of *St. Asaph*, from his Disciple of that Name, whom he left to govern that Church.

Young *Beuno* was educated under the Direction of a holy Man called *St. Dangesim*; and he advanced so fast in Perfection, that he spent two or three Days and Nights in continual Prayer, so that he was drawn with Reluctancy to refresh fainting Nature. He took an early Surfeit of worldly Vanity, he renounced the flattering Allurements of terrene Pleasures, and exchanged the glittering Grandeur of an opulent Fortune for the poor Habit of a Monk, resolving to spend the Remainder of his Days in the Practice of Evangelical Counsels. Being well settled, and throughly grounded in the Apostolical Institute, he observed the following laudable Practice to promote the Honour of his Creator. When he had built a Church and Monastery, and there established regular Discipline, he removed to some other Part of the Country to perform the like Duty to God; so that in few Years he became a common Father to numerous Religions, who respected him as their holy Founder.

This zealous Monk having finished his Monastery at *Clynoc Vawr* in *Carnarvanshire*, found himself powerfully inspired to visit his Relations in *Fflintshire*. 'Tis true, he had long before bid *adieu* to all Ties of Flesh and Blood; but he understood this Call as a Voice from Heaven. A rich and potent Lord in that Part of *North Wales* where now *Holy-well* is, had marry'd the virtuous and noble Lady *Wenlo*, (d) Sister to *St. Beuno*. His Name

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(d) To satisfy his complaining *Pilgrims*, the Editor (or rather Author) of this *new Life*, is very careful to give them a very particular Account of *Wenefrede's* Relations. He tells

was *Theuith*, some write him *Trebwith*; but a Manuscript now before me, of one of the eruditeſt Antiquaries of the laſt Age, ſays his Name was *Tyuid*. Theſe Parents of *St. Wenefride*, by an exemplar and truly *Chriſtian* Life, ſurpaſs'd their high Extraction. They reckon'd ſolid Virtue as the moſt diſtinguiſhing Quality; and they pitied vicious Potentates, who are contemptible in the Eyes of the King of Kings. *St. Wenefride*, the Glory of *Wefſt Britain*, was born in the troubleſome Reign of King *Cadwalloen*; and *St. Beuno* made his Viſit to his Brother-in-Law's Houſe, in the Reign of King (c) *Eluith*, the ſecond of that Name. The venerable Monk, having with much Humility, and great Modeſty, made himſelf known, he told them, That he was ſent by *Almighty God* to honour him there, as he had done in other Places; and that he neither expected, nor craved any other Favour, than a

us, her Mother was my Lady *Went*, and that *St. Beuno* was her Uncle, and her Father's true Name *Tyuid*: Which are Diſcoveries that are owing entirely to the MS. that was before him; for *Robert of Salop* ſays no ſuch thing, nor the *Oxon Life* of *Beuno*, nor the *Cotton MS.* nor any other Account, Latin, or Engliſh, in Verſe or in Proſe (for I have all before me, in ſuch Abundance.) However, I do not queſtion the Editor's Sincerity herein; but only take Occaſion from hence to pray theſe *Pilgrims* to conſider upon what Uncertainties they travel, upon what poor and wretched Bottoms the Lives of their Saints are built.

(c) The Editor ſays *Beuno* viſited his Siſter in the Reign of King *Eluith* the ſecond of that Name. I believe it would puzzle the eruditeſt Antiquaries of all *Wales*, to tell us, when, or where, *Eluith*, either *Fiſt* or *Second*, reigned. But ſince he copies this Miſtake from *J. F. the Jeſuit*, I will ſet them both right. It is in *Robertus Salopiensis* thus — *Pervenit ad Prædium cujuſdam Magni & Potentiſſimi Viri, nomine Theuith, qui filius unius ſummi atque excellentiſſimi Senatoris, & a Rege Secundi, Eluith nomine.* Which is in Engliſh — He came to the Mannor-houſe of a certain great and mighty Man, whoſe Name was *Teuith*; who was the Son of a moſt high and excellent Lord, and the very next Man to the King, whoſe Name was *Eluith*. The Jeſuit had, by conſtruing wrong, created a new Prince of *North Wales*, (of which there was no Manner of Need;) and tho' he be now depoſed, yet *Wenefride* has thereby got a Grandfather, even *Eluith*, the Father of *Truth*, who, I deſire, may be hereafter placed in his right Genealogical Order.



small Parcel of his large Territories, sufficient to build a Church on; where others, with my self (said he) will daily pray for your Safety and Happiness.

*Thewith* (I shall stile him so for the future) was not in the miserable Catalogue of those thoughtless blind Worldlings, who are prodigal in Vanity and Ostentation, but start and frown at the first Proposal of parting with small Matters for the Advantage of their Souls. No, he look'd forward with other Eyes, towards a more permanent Being, than here upon sordid Earth; therefore turn'd the following Answer: With good Reason, holy Father, I am obliged to give you Part of the Lands I now possess, for his Sake and Service, who bestowed them all upon me. You have pleasur'd me, in asking this Charity, which is more advantageous to me than to you who propose it: Therefore from this very Day, I do absolutely alienate from my self, and my Posterity, this Manor I now live in, and with Joy I surrender unto you all my Right and Title, and I put you into Possession. I humbly beg a Favour, that having one only Child, a tender Virgin, who is my special Comfort, you'll instruct her in heavenly Documents, that her Life and Conversation may be holy, pleasing to God, and joyful to her Parents. After this generous Settlement, the Nobleman made choice of a Dwelling-Seat, not far distant from the Place he had given to St. Beuno; where, on a Hill, he could see the Church, where the Servants of God prais'd their Maker.

As *Constantine* the Great, at the Building of St. Peter's Basilica, divesting himself of his Imperial Robes, took up the Spade, broke Ground, and carry'd twelve Baskets of Earth, in Honour of the twelve Apostles, to cast into the Foundation, in Testimony of his Devotion to the primitive Princes of Christianity; so in Imitation of this heroick Pattern, the noble Lord *Thewith* set aside State and Birth, many times putting his own Hands to the holy Work. This he did to encourage others, and to contribute in some sort to the finishing of the Fabrick. The Church being made fit to offer in it the (f) Divine Sacrifice, he and his Spouse, with their only Child, were daily present at holy Mass.

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(f) I have already observed that this is none of Robert's Expressions, but of the Editor's own making; as most of the Life hitherto is.



*Mass.* They had this pious Custom, to place their Daughter at the Saint's Feet, at the Time of his Exhortations to the People, advising her to give Attention to his excellent Doctrine. This was not necessary, altho' religiously suggested by pious Parents; for she was so much transported with a holy Delight in hearing him preach, that she frequently visited him alone, to discourse of Self-Knowledge and Christian Performances.

'Twas her Parents Intention to marry her to some Nobleman of the Country, and to bestow on her a most plentiful Fortune; but her ever blessed Redeemer, in those tender Years, was disposing her sweetly for his Service. By St. Beuno's frequent Discourses, she understood how great, how good, and how glorious the heavenly Spouse was; that voluntary Virgins are like Angels upon Earth; that they follow the Lamb wherever he goes, Apoc. xiv; that the Honours of the World are vain, and its Pleasures short-liv'd; so that the very Thought of a Terrene Husband became hurtful unto her. Wherefore she resolved to keep herself (g) undefiled, and to consecrate her pure Virginity to the Lord of Heaven and Earth. One main Difficulty occur'd, how to render her Parents favourable to this heavenly Call. She burned with the Love of God, and at the same time she resolved to fulfil the Commandment of honouring Father and Mother. In this Struggle betwixt Divine Vocation and Christian Duty, the Bestower of all Lights put her into a Method how to prepare the Way towards her Happiness, by making use of St. Beuno, as a glorious Instrument.

This holy Man was honoured as a Saint by her Parents, and by Consequence she knew very well, that he had great Power and Authority with them, and they would not reject any reasonable Request made by him, such as she took hers to be. Impatient of losing Time, for completing her Design, having found him one Day alone, and at Liberty, she acquainted him with the holy Fruits of his moving Discourses, and after a very pathetick Manner, humbly petitioned for his zealous Concurrence, in pre-

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(g) St. Paul's Opinion is, that Marriage is honourable in all and the Bed undefiled: but the Monk's Opinion is, that they who would keep themselves undefiled, must not marry.

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serving the rich Treasure of her Virginity, which she resolved never to part with, for all the Offers that the flattering World could make her. St. Beuno was agreeably surprized at this most welcome News; for, as St. Paul, he desir'd all to be like unto himself, 1 Cor. xi. 1. He had unshaken Confidence in God's Power and Goodness, that he who had begun the Work, would give it the finishing Stroke. Moreover, being no Stranger to the singular Piety of those he was to treat with, he chearfully undertook the Task, to the unexpressible Satisfaction of the expecting Virgin.

We cannot read without flowing Tears, how faithful Abraham, in Obedience to God's Command, had his Hand list'd up to sacrifice his Son Isaac, his only begotten Son, whom he loved, Gen. xxii. 2. not so much as demurring at the first Intimation of the Omnipotent; perchance it may move us to Devotion, by a serious Consideration, how the Lord Thewith entertained this unexpected Petition of his dear Child. Besides the internal Gifts of Grace, and apparent Vertues, which charmed her devout Parents, her Stature was well proportion'd, her Face was matchless, her Modesty equalled her Beauty, Qualifications much admired by Mankind. She was the agreeable Object of their Eyes, the Support of their Family, and the Prospect of their Happiness upon Earth. Yet no sooner had St. Beuno delivered his Sentiments, as to the Nature of the Offering, That it was a sort of *Holocaust* to sacrifice their Affections, and to bequeath to their God the dearest Creature in the World, whom they loved more than they did themselves, with other persuasive Reasons to the same Effect; the holy Man, I say, had no sooner ended his Discourse, but contrary to the Weakness of other fond Parents, Tears of Joy came trickling down Lord Thewith's Cheeks, who with his Spouse, broke out in the Praises of Jesus Christ, for so highly favouring their only Child. They then called for their Daughter, and gave her full and free Leave to forsake the World, wishing her a happy Progress in the Way of Perfection. They likewise declared, That the heavenly Spouse having made choice of her, they intended to make him Heir of what they designed for her Dowry, by disposing of the same, to his greater Honour, in pious and religious Uses. They drew also this Advantage to themselves, of renouncing the World,

World, so far as was consistent with Persons in their Station. They entered into a firm Resolution of giving to the Poor great part of their Princely Wealth, of retiring from Worldly Noise and Hurry, that with an undepend- ing Freedom they might be more absolute Masters of short Time, to provide and send before them never ending Treasures in Heaven.

The pious Virgin receiving this coveted Grant, concluded that she could never return sufficient Thanks to God for the Favour. She watched whole Nights in the Church, either kneeling, or prostrate before the Altar, where she imagined to herself that she was in her immortal *Sponse's* Presence-Chamber. Contemplation raised her up into Ad- miration of His infinite Perfections ; so that to hear *Jesus Christ* only named, brought joyful Tears into her Eyes from a flaming Heart. Pure Delights overflow'd her Soul, and looking towards Heaven, the World appeared base and contemptible. To add Fuel to this pleasing Fire, she procured a little Oratory near unto St. *Beuno's* Cell, to visit him with greater Ease in the Day-time, and in silent Night to practise her *Master's* Spiritual Lessons.

The implacable *Enemy* of Mankind, suspecting that such high Beginnings of Perfection in tender Years, might prove a powerful Invitation to other Noble *Virgins* of de- spising themselves and the World, employ'd one of his incarnate *Emissaries* to defeat the Design of the *Holy Ghost*. What *Hell* cannot effect by its own immediate Suggesti- ons, it too frequently brings about by the insinuating Ar- guments of lewd Mortals. Wherefore, such as induce others to forfeit Divine Grace by mortal Sin, are detesta- ble Instruments of rebellious *Lucifer*. As the Devil put into the Heart of Judas Iscariot to betray the Son of God, John xiii. 2. so he cast an impure Flame into the Heart of *Cradoctus*, King *Alen's* Son, to commit a sacrilegious Rape upon *Christ's* lovely *Spouse*. He was sottishly enamoured with the Charms of her Person, not casting an Eye on the Beauty of her Vertues ; so waited for an Opportunity to gratify his brutish Passion, which thus happened. One Sunday St. *Wenefride's* Parents being gone to Church before her, and she for a short Space detained at Home on a cha- ritable Account, soon to follow after ; the Prince having Intelligence, entered the House, under Pretence of Busi- ness with the Lord *Thewith*. At first the holy *Maid*, nor



## The Life of St. Wenefride.

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at all suspecting his Insincerity or Design, received him very courteously, with the humble Apology of her Unworthiness to entertain one of his Royal Birth: *But if you please* (said she) *to repose your self in a more convenient Room till Divine Service is ended, my Father will be at Liberty to serve you.* To this candid and obliging Answer of the bashful Virgin, *Cradocus*, now more than ever enflamed with sinful Desires, reply'd in the greatest Disorder, That nothing could be more agreeable than to stay in her Company, since it was then solely in her Power to make him happy. If she comply'd with the ardent Desires of a passionate Lover, she might expect all the Happiness his Power and Quality was capable of bestowing upon her.

Although the Virgin blush'd and trembled at the Immodesty of this wicked Proposal, yet being perfectly present to herself in the dangerous Occasion, and fortify'd with Divine Grace and Light from Heaven, she answer'd, That there was not the least Doubt to be made of enjoying Honours, Wealth, and Worldly Happiness, by being espoused to so noble a Prince; that she was in great Confusion to be so suddenly surprized in such mean Attire, not becoming his Presence: *Wherefore permit me* (said she) *to enter my Chamber adjoining to this, to better my Dress.* *Cradocus* in the Heat of his Passion, unwillingly gave ear to the Virgin's Petition, yet could not refuse a Request accompany'd with so much Modesty and seeming Deference to his Quality. She no sooner got clear of so impudent a Guest, but slipping out privately by another Door, she immediately ran towards the Church, sure of meeting with Protection there from so villainous an Attempt. Mean time the Prince, impatient of so long a Delay, and not without some Suspicion of what had happened, rush'd into the Room to which she retired; not finding her there, he pursued her so eagerly, that he overtook her on the Descent of the Hill before she could gain the Church. There with a drawn Sword in his Hand, and with Fury in his Face, he threatens to separate her Head from her Body, unless she quickly consented to his Will.

Here methinks appeared a lively Representation of the Anguish and Perplexities on every Side of chaste *Susanna*, whose Honour and Conscience was attempted by the two lascivious Judges. If she consented 'twas Death to her, and if she did not she would not escape their Hands, Dan. xiii. 22.

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The noble Israelite came to this final Resolution, *To suffer for me, without the Aid, to fall into your Hands, than to sin in the Sight of our Lord.* Oh! that Christians had such a Horror and Detestation of mortal Sin, to look upon it as more hideous and frightful than a violent Death. St. Wenefride was of that settled Opinion; she had two Sorts of Deaths waiting for an Answer, a Separation of the Soul from the Body, or a Separation of the Soul from God: She did not ballance upon the Matter, but undauntedly and heroically reply'd, How, by her Parents Approbation, she was holily espoused to the Son of God, who infinitely exceeds all Power and Beauty upon Earth; that she would be faithful and constant in her pure Affections, and rather lose her Life, than to admit any Corriual. *Neither shall your Menaces and Terrours (said she) draw me from the Sweetness of his Love, nor so overcome me, as to make me recede in the least from executing what I have promised.* As it happens sometimes that despised carnal Love turns into Rage, so it fared with barbarous Cradocus, who seeing himself scorn'd (as he thought) gave such a deadly Blow to the Virgin's Neck, that the first Stroke severed the Head from the Body; which falling upon the Descent of the Hill, roll'd down to the Church, where the Congregation was kneeling before the Altar. As they were terrify'd with the bloody Object of her Head, so they were astonish'd to behold a clear and rapid Spring pushing out of that Spot of Ground her Head had first fallen upon, which to this very Day is visited from all Parts by Devout Pilgrims. The Place of her Martyrdom had before her Death the Name of the Dry Valley, or Barren Bottom, which was changed into the Title of Fynhan, which in old Welsh signifies a Fountain or Well. 'Twas also observed, that the Stones of the Well were tinctur'd with Drops, as it were, of Blood, to perpetuate the Memory of what she had shed for the Love of Christ; and in Process of Time 'twas taken Notice of, that the Moss growing round the Well had a very fragrant Smell, as an Emblem of the Odour of her Angelical Vertues.

To close the last Act of this inhumane Tragedy, and to relate the dreadful Stroke of Divine Justice on the cruel Tyrant, we are to premise with Brevity, that the just Grief of the holy Virgin's Parents is not to be expressed, seeing their dear Child so villainously butcher'd almost

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before their Eyes. St. Benno's Virtue was also put to the Test, to bear with true Resignation the Loss of so devout a Creature. Tears came trickling down his Cheeks at the Sight of the horrid Murder. The afflicted People, with united Voices called upon Heaven for speedy Execution against him who had committed that heinous Outrage. Indignation accompanied Compassion, when they beheld the unrelenting Assassin wiping his bloody Sword upon the Grass, and glorying in the detestable Fact, without any Fear of God or Man. St. Benno was preparing to offer the Unbloody Sacrifice of our Redemption, but being inspired by him who declared, *Revenge to me, and I will repay it,* Deut. xxxii. 35. he left the Altar, and taking the blessed Martyr's Head into his trembling Hands, he mounted the Ascent towards Cradocus. He feared not such a Blow as was given to the tender Virgin; on the same Account, for the Love of Christ, he would have bid it welcome. Faithful Servants of God dread nothing, Sin only excepted. Being come up to him, he said, *Thou wicked Man, who, without any Regard to Innocence or Beauty, hast massacred a Princely Virgin, no less nobly born than thy self. Nor dost thou repent, or seem sorry, as thou oughtest to do, for this horrid Sacrilege. I here beseech my Heavenly Lord, that, for an Example to others, he will please to enact his Divine Judgment against thee, who hast murdered his Spouse, smothered his People, violated his Sabbath, and besprinkled his holy Place with blood, which I consecrated to his Service.* As the Earth swallowed up rebellious and perverse Corah, *Numb. xvi.* so some affirm, that at St. Benno's last Words, Cradocus not only dropp'd down dead, but also that the Earth opened to give Passage to the luxurious Body to sink towards his monstrous Soul, or that the Master whom he had served, the Devil, carry'd it off; for it is certain, that the Carcase of the cruel Murderer never afterwards appeared.

The Faithful glorified God in his Justice, but could not curb their Grief. St. Benno earnestly exhorted the Parents and People to turn from Lamentations, and to address the Creator of Souls, and Raiser up of dead Bodies, that as he had commanded back Lazarus to Life, entering in his Monument, so, to his greater Honour and Glory, and for the Comfort of the sorrowful Parents, who had so generously dedicated this darling Child to his Service, he would graciously vouchsafe to restore her to Life. He



then joind the sacred Head to the pale Body, covering both with his Cloak, after which he offered up the holy Sacrifice of our Salvation.

After Mass was ended, he, lifting up his Hands to Heaven, made the following Prayer; O Lord Jesus Christ for whose sake this holy Virgin contain'd the World, and languish'd after Thee; by the tender Bowels of thy Mercy, Love, and Bounty, be graciously pleas'd to grant us the Effect of our Vows and Prayers humbly offered unto Thee. We are fully perswaded that this godly Virgin, who lived holily, and died for Thee with great Constancy, is now highly exalted, and wants no more the Society of us mortal and miserable Creatures. Let it manifest thy Omnipotence and Supreme Dominion which thou hast over Souls and Bodies, which are never dead to thy Power of reuniting them; and also to multiply the Merits of that Soul, whose Body lies here before us: We crave a second Life for her, to the end that after a long and plentiful Harvest, laden and enriched with new Merits, she may return unto Thee, her Eternal Spouse, and the Beloved of her Heart, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, rulest on Earth, and reignest in Heaven for ever and ever. The pious People, drown'd in Tears, having, with Sighs and moving Sobbs, answered devoutly, Amen, the Virgin arose, as newly awaked from Sleep. She wiped her Eyes and Face to clear away that glorious Dust, which had settled on her lovely Head when it tumbled towards her dear St. Benno. The Decollation of St. Wenefride is celebrated on the 22d of June. (h)

Contemplate here (dear Reader) the Joy and Admiration which then transported all present at this wonderful Miracle. Tears burst out more plentifully, but flowing from

(h) One MS. says the 22d, but the Cotton one and that of Sir James Ware say the 23th. *Officium Kalend. Jul.* So that she died upon the same Day both at Holy-well and Gutterin. And I wonder how the Archbishop of Canterbury, with his Clergy in Convocation assembled, came to appoint her Day to be observed on the 3d of November, which they did in 1398, more than 700 Years after her supposed Death. They also appointed Nine Lessons to be read on her Festival, which are yet to be seen in the *Breviary Secundum usum Sarum*, and which (I mention it for his Credit) are almost Word for Word taken out of her Legend, written by the good Monk Robert of Shrewsbury.

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from a different Cause. They magnified and blessed the boundless Goodness of her Great God, every one resolving to rise with the Saint to a Newness of reforming their past Lives. One Particular in this surprizing Resuscitation is very remarkable; viz. When her Parents and others fixed their Eyes upon her Neck, they observed a pure white Circle, no larger than a small Thread, quite round it, denoting the Place where the Separation had been made, which always after remained. From this the great Veneration of the People for her changed her Name, which was *Brewa*, (1) into that of *Wenefride*. *Wen* in the old British Tongue signifies *White*, and other Letters were by an Alteration added to this Syllable, to render more agreeable the Sound of the new Name. In the many Apparitions after her Second Death, when she shewed herself to her devout Clients, they always took special Notice of the aforesaid white Circle, which intimated to them the indelible Mark of her spouse's Affection, for suffering that mortal Wound so courageously for his Sake.

Permit me here to break off for a while the Thread of this Discourse by a short, but necessary, Digression, in order to obviate the Cavils of some modern incredulous Critics, who seem now-a-days to entertain such strange Notions of these Supernatural Works of Almighty God, that they believe nothing that suits not exactly with the fanciful Ideas of their own Brain. These Refiners will be apt not only to carp at what is here related concerning this Holy Virgin's Return to Life, but perhaps also turn to Ridicule what follows hereafter, of her sending Pre-

sents

(1) *Wen Brewa, Wen Prewa, Wen Frewa, Wenefreda*, as *Lansan-fraid*, comes from *St. Bride*, which is *St. Brigit*. The *Custom* Life takes no Notice of the Change of her Name, but says her Name was *Wenefreda* always, and, which is more, calls her *Candida Wenefreda*; and yet he who wrote it, seems to have been a *Witchman*. And the old English Legend of the Saints Lives says thus, *And ever as long as she lived after, there apiered about her Neck a Rednes round about, lyke to a rede threde of Silk, in Signe and Token of her Martyrdome*; which quite overthrows our Criticism. It matters not much whether the Circle were white or red, provided there were any; and *Robert* assures us, that after her last Departure out of this World she never shewed herself openly to any one, who did not also see this Circle, which I dare say is true.

sents to St. Beuno by the Current of the Miraculous Fountain, and several other wonderful Things contained in the following Pages. As it would be highly criminal to pretend to fathom the Wisdom of God by our shallow Capacities, or to confine his Omnipotence to the bounded Limits of the greatest Power upon Earth; so it would be Madness in us to believe every thing, without rational Grounds and sufficient Authority. But when we find such Instances of the Infinite Power and Goodness of Almighty God, as we have here in this History recorded (k) by Learned

(k) I refer the Reader to what has been said in the Observations before-going, and to the Chapter of Notes, that he may from thence determine who these learned and pious Witnesses were, that for 300 Years together have not so much as named the Name of *Wenefride*; and how her Sanctity and Miracles can be said to be handed down to Posterity by an uninterrupted Tradition, when we can find no Mention made of her during that Space of Time. From the supposed Time of *Wenefride* to Robert of Salop are 300 Years; and after Robert no Body, that we know of, says any thing of her for full 300 Years more. And is not this a very proper Case to talk of Witness in, and of uninterrupted Tradition? As to what follows concerning Miracles, I refer the Reader to the Chapter on that Head, reminding him now only of these few Things: That Miracles are not to be believed, purely upon the Credit of him who relates them, unless he be an inspired Writer; because all Men are subject to be deceived themselves, and may, if they will, incline to deceive others. Nor are all Miracles to be believed, merely because God might and could have wrought them, if he would; nor are all to be believed, because they are of the same Kind with those which God hath already wrought in the Scriptures. In a Word, when the Miracles that are said to have been wrought by the Saints in their Legends have as full Authority and as good Proof as those we find in the Holy Scriptures, then they may be as certainly believed: Nay, when we are as sure that the Saints lived at such a Time, and wrought such and such Miracles, as we are that *Julius Caesar* lived, and that *Josephus* wrote his History, we will believe the one as surely as the other. But would one think it possible for any Man in his Senses to compare the Certainty of *Julius Caesar's* living, and of *Josephus's* writing his History, with the Certainty of *Wenefride's* and *Beuno's* Life and Miracles? Surely the Pilgrims ought not to endure, without Complaint, so great a Scorn and Insult upon their Understanding. What is it makes it worth these Writers while to expose the Scrip-



Learned and pious Witnesses, and handed down to Posterity by an uninterrupted Tradition for several Ages together, and never questioned till these our Days. It is the Duty of every rational Man and pious Christian, rather to acknowledge the Goodness of God, who appeared wonderful in these his Works, than dispute his Power by cavilling at Facts, only because they seem to stock his foolish Imagination. To condescend to the Weakness of future Ages, Divine Providence seems to have taken particular Care we should not want undoubted Examples of this Nature, to facilitate our Belief. We know the Prophet *Elisha* called back to Life the Son of the *Sunamite*, 4 Kings iv. St. Peter rais'd *Tabitha*, and St. Paul the young Man that fell from the Window, *Act. ix. 20*. Again, when the Sons of the Prophets were cutting down Wood on the Banks of the River *Jordan*, the Head of one of the Axes fell into the Water. The holy Prophet *Elisha* cutting a Piece of Wood, in Form of a Handle to it, cast it into the River. The Iron immediately, contrary to its Nature, came from the Bottom, and joyn'd the Wood, 4 Kings vi. If some of our modern Criticks, who pretend to more Wit than Religion, durst publish their prophane Notions

on the subject of Miracles, they would not only contradict the common Religion by such unequal and ridiculous Comparisons? We have no Distrust of God's Power to work what Miracles he pleases, and at what Time, and in what Manner; we only want Assurance of the Fact, from Writers of Authority and Credit, whose Skill, and Honesty, and Judgment, we may with good Reason depend upon. But must we presently believe, that every first of May, as long as *Beuno* lived, the Virgin came and brought a curious Vestment wrapped up in a Woollen Cloth, and laid it in the Midst of the *Well*, which was from thence carried down into the River, and thence into the *Dea*, and thence into the *Irish Seas*, and thence into the *Menas*, and from thence to *Clynog Fair*, where *Beuno* lived, and received it safe and dry, as if it had been carried in a Ship; which is a Course of at least 50 Miles, and has as many Crooks, and Windings, and perverse Turnings, as it is possible for the Sea and Land to make, in such a Compass. Must we, I say, believe this annual Miracle upon the Credit of a Monk or two, delivering the same 500 Years after the Fact, because it was not impossible to God, and because the Scriptures tell us, that Iron swam at the Prophet *Elisha's* bidding? And yet this is the Reasoning of this Writer.

on this Occasion, as freely as they do in other miraculous Cases, not mention'd in holy Writ, they would ask, *What* Sympathy the Iron was mov'd from the Bottom of the River, to seek for, and by what Art it found out the Piece of Wood swimming on the Surface of the Waters? Whether the Recovery of the lost Head of an Ax, was a Matter of such Importance, that God should think fit to employ his Omnipotence, in working so great a Miracle to find it? But to silence all such prophane Reflections in those who pretend to Christianity, Almighty God has been pleas'd not only to work this, and the like Miracles, but provided they should be stamp'd with Divine Truth, and deliver'd down to all Ages to come, in the very Word of God it self. *Is it harder to believe,* that a little light Bundle should float upon the Sea, and arrive safe in a Creek, near unto which St. *Beuno* then lived, without the least Damage, than that the Head of an Ax, a lumpish Piece of Iron, should swim upon the Surface of the Waters of the River *Jordan*, and join a Piece of Wood thrown in after it in Form of a Handle? Without Doubt both Facts are wonderful, both Miracles.

I know there is a very wide, and, as I may say, an infinite Disparity between Miracles registered in holy Scripture, and those recommended to Posterity by learned and unquestionable Authors: But when Facts are so fully attested by a Cloud of Witnesses, and deliver'd down to us by the universal Belief of all Ages, as in the Case before us, of our Saint's being rais'd to Life by the Prayer of St. *Beuno*, and of the Manner she sent Presents to him afterwards; it would be as unpardonable in a rational Man to refuse his Assent, as to deny that there ever was such a Person in the World as *Julius Caesar*, or that whatever *Josephus* the Historian has left written of the *Jewish Wars* was nothing but a meer Fable. Let then the Atheists rally, let the Incredulous mutter; all good Christians know, that the Son of God, who neither can nor will deceive, has made this infallible Promise to his Church, That he will be with her to the End of the World, Mat. xxviii. 20. and that they who believe in him, shall not only do the Works he did, but even greater than those which they do, Joh. xiv. 12. Can the Hand of God be shortend? or, Can his Goodness receive any Diminution?

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No, no; your Omnipotence, O Lord, is still the same, and of your Mercies there is no End.

Whatever this incredulous Age may think of this great Miracle of our Saint's Return to Life; it appear'd so evident to the *West Britains*, and redounded so much to the Honour of God's Church, St. Beuno's Sanctity, and the Power he had with his Creator, that many *Pagan People*, remaining in those Parts, came to hear the *holy Man's* Instructions in the *Catholick Faith*, and to receive Baptism.

St. Wenefride, according to her former Practice, like Mary at the Feet of Christ, sat on a low Seat before him. She was never satiated with the heavenly Manna, which fell from his angelical Tongue. She counted as nothing what she had already done or suffer'd, and restless to be more strictly united to her beloved Spouse, she aspired to the Height of Perfection. Wherefore she most humbly begg'd upon her Knees to be solemnly veil'd, (according to the Custom of the primitive Ages) that by entering into a religious Course of Life, she might put Hell to greater Confusion, which had fiercely attempted to dishonour God and her self: But mostly, that she might pour forth her Soul in the Presence of her eternal Spouse, with a flaming and disengaged Heart, entirely his; and say, *Behold I have left all things, and followed thee; St. Mat. xix. 27.*

St. Beuno, with Tears of Joy, complied with this religious Request, and performed the Ceremony in a numerous Assembly. He knew to what a Degree of Sanctity the Spirit of God would raise her, for his own Glory, and the Improvement of others; therefore he spent whole Days in cultivating her Soul, in what regarded a religious State. She, as an apt Scholar, took in so fast the frequent Lessons, and put them in Practice so punctually, that it struck her Master into Admiration. He finding her so far advanced in an interior Life, that she was even able to direct and govern others in the Way to Perfection, one Day he called for her Parents, and after the following Manner delivered unto them his Sentiments and Resolutions.

As you (said he) have most liberally bestowed a Church and House for the Service of God, and for the Help and Benefit of the Faithful, so his Divine Majesty has more than sufficiently requir'd your Charity, by conferring on you spiritual Favours, but more especially on your Child, whom; for the Time to come,  
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you may follow as a safe Guide, in our blessed Redeemer's Service. I am call'd on by Heaven to another Place; and I leave you to the Grace and Goodness of God, and to the rare Example of your Daughter. Then turning to St. Wenefride, he said, Our Lord, dear Child, has appointed you to succeed in my Labours. March on in the Way of Virtue, as I have taught you, and guide others on the Road to Eternal Life. Gather in this very Place, for your heavenly Spouse, many pure and devout Virgins; but know withal, that here you shall not end your Days, for after the Term of seven Years, spent by you in Prayer and Austerities, for your own Merits, and Edification of others, our gracious Lord will summon you to another Place, that Strangers may be instructed by you, and come to the true Knowledge and Service of him, for whose Sake you fell a Victim of Purity.

When the Ancients of Ephesus had heard St. Paul declare unto them, that they should see no more his Face, Act. xx. 25. they fell upon his Neck, and there was great Weeping. In like Manner, when St. Wenefride was acquainted by her admired Master, that she should not see him any more in this World, a lawful Grief seem'd to overwhelm her. To comfort her in such deep Affliction, St. Bueno took her by the Hand, and led her to the Chrystalline Fountain, the Place of her Martyrdom; where they sitting together on a Stone, bearing to this Day the Name of St. Bueno's Stone, and which lieth now in the outward Well; You see (said he) the Monument here of your Sufferings. Behold also the Stones, as tinctur'd with your Blood, which was shed for the Glory of your heavenly Spouse. Be you therefore attentive, and mindful of what I do foretel you, concerning three special Favours, whereby your glorious Spouse Jesus Christ will hereafter honour your self, and by your Prayers benefit others. The First is, That these bloody Spots shall never be wash'd off from the said Stones, but ever remain, as triumphant Signs of your Blood, spilt in Defence of your Chastity. The Second is, That any Person who shall devoutly ask Temporal Blessings, or Freedom from Spiritual or Corporal Distresses, to be obtained by your Merits and Intercession, the same shall compass his Request, if it be to the Honour and Glory of God, by paying their Devotions three times at this Well. If what he petitions for be not for the Advantage of his Soul, and therefore is not granted; at his Death, by your Prayers, he shall reap more ample Fruit, and in the next World everlasting Blef-

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Blessings. *The Third*, That after my Departure into a more remote Part of this Island, God will give me a Cell near unto the Sea Shore ; so that whenever you send any Letters or Tokens to me, as I intreat you to do at least once every Year, only cast them into the Stream of this Fountain, and they will come safe unto me. Which Wonders will be gloriously divulged of you ; to the End of the World.

He then conducted her back to the Church ; where he added, Behold this Church, and Buildings round it, which have been rais'd by the Munificence of your Parents ; these I leave unto you, to be converted into a Monastery of chaste and holy Virgins, who moved by your pious Instructions and exemplar Life, may put in Practice those divine Lessons, which I have often delivered unto you ; that is, the Contempt of the World, and an entire Abnegation of themselves : which are the Foundation of religious Perfection. Strive therefore, dear Child, in all things, to exhibit your self as a lively Pattern of Virtue. As to my poor self, I will go whither the Spirit of God shall direct me, and shall ever retain in my Heart and Soul, a most fatherly and loving Memory of you.

To experience the racking Effects of a rational Sorrow, is nothing derogatory to solid Virtue. The Holy of Holies not only groan'd, but wept at the Tomb of Lazarus, St. Luke xi. 35. and he shed Tears upon Jerusalem, St. Luke xix. 41. for the future Calamities of that obstinate City, which would not know the Time of its Visitation. The royal Prophet, a Man according to God's own Heart, upon taking his last Farewel of his beloved Jonathan, they wept together, but David more, i Reg. xx. 41. It must not then seem strange, that the tender Heart of this doleful Virgin, was ready to split asunder with Grief, at the last Adieu, in this World. The more he attempted to sweeten this bitter Separation, his charming Words caused her swelling Sorrow to float higher ; insomuch, that when she saw him, with his Staff in his Hand, ready to depart, she rated the approaching Loss as the heaviest Cross upon Earth, and could not forbear expressing thus her self unto him ; Now, holy Father, I am to be left alone, as a poor Orphan Child without a Nurse, or as a silly Sheep amongst ravenous Wolves, without a Pastor to defend me. I was always safe with you, always joyful in your Presence, always instructed by your Exhortations, and edify'd by your Example. These Words, attended with flow-

ing Tears, so much oppress'd St. *Beuno's* Heart, that not being able to utter any Answer, he bless'd her with his Hand, and hasten'd his Pace in the Beginning of his Journey.

Nothing now could comfort her, save only the fresh Remembrance of all his pious Instructions, and an earnest Desire of executing obediently his Commands. Accordingly, in a short Time, she associated to her self many noble and devout *Virgins*, who observ'd such Rules as she establish'd for them. She order'd nothing but what first she practis'd her self; and Miracles were not wanting to increase her Authority, and the Opinion of her Sanctity. Their Love and Respect towards her, caused each of them to contend who should be most forward in the Imitation of her rare Perfections. They nauseated sordid Pleasures, they undervalued Wealth and Honours, and they seem'd to be Inhabitants of a *Terrestrial Paradise*, in loving and serving their heavenly Spouse, the Son of God. She govern'd her Subjects with endearing Commands, so that they obey'd with equal Merit and Content. She eas'd them in their Difficulties and Temptations, insomuch that they observing her rigid Mortification, her angelical Purity, and knowing the strict Union she had with God in Prayer, whatever she declar'd unto them, was receiv'd as Oracles from Heaven.

The spreading Fame of St. *Wenefride* was wonderfully dilated by miraculous Cures of diseased Persons. They were frequent and apparent, and divulg'd thro' other Parts of *Wales*. Many flock'd from distant Places to hear her Discourse, and to receive Instructions; whom she sent away with flaming Hearts, and ardent Desires to be faithful and fervent in the Service of their God. They regretted a Return to their respective Habitations; and as the Queen of *Saba* stood astonished at *Solomon's* singular Wisdom, so these admiring Strangers magnified the constant Happiness of the *Virgins* she govern'd, and blessed those who always stood before her, iii Reg. x. 8. they having such a secure Mistress, and so tender a Mother.

Gratitude for received Favours is not only a moral Virtue; but the eternal Employ of *Cherubins* and *Seraphims*, who are now adoring, and offering never ending Thanks to the infinite Goodness of their Omnipotent Creator, who commanded them out of the Chaos of Nothing. St. *Wenefride* had a most grateful Soul; she honour'd St. *Beuno* as



an eminent Servant of God; she loved him as a Father; she respected him as a Master; and could never sufficiently acknowledge her Duty to her greatest Benefactor, after him who made her. St. Beuno delivered to her the first Rudiments of Perfection; he incited her to embrace a religious State; he obtained for her by his Prayers a second Life, and polish'd her Interior, that she was amiable in the Sight of God and Men. To make some small Return, she sent him every Year a Token, after the Manner he had prescribed. In the Beginning of May, (1) almost a Year after his Departure, with the Help of her religious Sisters, she finish'd a curious embroider'd Vestment, (m) and wrapping

(1) The Cotton-Life says this Present was sent upon every Eve of St. John Baptist: and so it might come to Beuno upon that very Day, on which her own Head, as well as St. John's, was cut off.

(m) This Editor translates *Casula* by *Vestment*, tho' it properly signify a *Chasuble*, which is somewhat for the Priests use, in celebrating Divine Service: But I incline to think it was rather an ordinary Vestment, or a travelling Coat, for daily use, because the Cotton-Life says, that wherever Beuno went with this *Casula*, he was never wet in it, (that Power it seems it was indu'd withal) and from thence was called Beuno *Casulseek*, or Beuno-drycoat. Now I think so great a Saint as Beuno, would never go abroad in any of the holy Habits, that were proper to the Priest whilst he was officiating; and moreover, the coming of the Vestment dry, after such a Voyage, was not so proper to denominate the Saint *Casulseek*, as its keeping him dry when he was going about his religious Business in rainy Weather would be. And tho' this be adding Miracle to Miracle, yet it is no great Matter, when compared with what the Monk *Jocelinus* tells us of good St. Kentigern, in the 35th Chap. of his Life, namely, that whenever he went abroad, whether in Rain, or Hail, or Snow, there was not a Drop that fell upon him, but discharged it self all around, and left him dry; nay those who went along with him did also escape these Inconveniencies; so favoured of God was this great Saint. And least the Reader should incline a little to disbelieve this Account, the Author bids him remember, that the Israelites travelled forty Years, and their Raiment waxed not old; and that nothing was impossible with God; which shews what excellent use the Monks are apt to make of Scripture Examples. The Cotton-Life says this Bundle that was sent to Beuno, was not thrown into the Well, but laid upon a Stone in the Well; which Stone sailed, with its Freight, till it came to Beuno's Cell, and

ping the same in a Woollen Cloth, she went down with her *Religious*, and others, to the Well Side, and casting the Bundle into the Water, she said, *Holy Father, according to your Command, and my Promise, I send you this small Token of my Love.* To the great Astonishment of numerous Beholders, it passed down the Stream into the River, then into the *Sea*, and it landed near the Monastery where *St. Beuno* then dwelt, many Miles distant from the *holy Fountain*.

The *holy Man* was then walking on the Sea Shore, and wondered what that Bundle should be; but opening it, he remembered the Charge he had given to *St. Wenefride*, and that, as he had foretold, it came miraculously to him, without the least Sign of Wet or Moisture. This *Vestment* he preserved with great Care in the Church, for the Celebration of *holy Mass*. He likewise received fresher Lights of her present and future Sanctity; how much *Almighty God* would be honoured by her, not only at *Finhow*, but in other Places whither Divine Providence should direct her to go. The *Virgin* never intermitted to send him a yearly Present, till his most happy Death was reveal'd unto her, and the glorious Reward he was crowned with in Heaven.

This last Passage may appear to incredulous Drolls the most surprizing of all others in the History of *St. Wenefride's* Life, therefore Divine Providence thought fit to authenticate the Memory of it to this very Day, and after this Manner. In *Carnarvonshire*, eight Miles distant from the Town of *Carnarvon*, there is a little Creek where the Sea runs up, called in *Welsh* (n) *Porth y Casseg*, (corruptedly,

there delivered it dry into his Hands. And why not, since nothing is impossible with God, and since we are sure that Iron swam, and sure that the Hand of the Lord is not shortened? But as sure as all these things are, there is another full as sure, and that is, that *Monks can invent*.

(n) *Porth y Casseg*. The Editor is very much exalted at this lucky Incident, that there is still a Creek in *Carnarvonshire*, that is called *Porth y Casseg*, which should be *Porth y Cassul*, or the Port of the *Vestment*; and thinks it a full Proof of the above-told Story of the *Vestment's* yearly Voyage from *Holy-well* to *Beuno's* Monastery at *Glynog Vawr*; and says that the Port of the *Vestment* solves the Objection from the Year 660 to 1712. By

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edly, as I could instance in other Appellations) for *Port y Cassul*, or the *Port of the Vestment*. Here the first Present of our Saint miraculously landed; and the Place retains the Name to this Day. Near unto this Inlet stands a large Parish Church call'd *Clynnog*, in which St. *Beuno* was buried, his first founded Monastery being there. His Tomb is yet extant, and is had in great Veneration by the Inhabitants. The History of St. *Wenefride's* Life was curiously represented in the Glass Windows of *Clynnog* Church, but has been so defaced, that little now appears. What can be more persuasive to obtain Credit to this Miracle, than so ancient and so certain a Tradition, even to those who use their utmost Efforts to destroy the Memory

this it appears, that he takes three things for granted; 1. That there is such a Creek as *Port y Cassul*; 2. That this is *Port y Cassul*; and, 3. That this has been so call'd from 660 to 1713, i. e. for 1052 Years. To the First I say, there is no such Name in any of our Maps; nor is the Place known by that Name to the Inhabitants thereabouts, as I can learn upon Enquiry. There is such a Place in Monmouthshire, called now *Parcassul*, but in the *Monasticon* 'tis call'd *Portheassul*. To the Second I say, that *Port y Cassul*, is as likely to be the Name as *Port y Cassul*, altho' such Changes are very easy and natural. But I demurr to the Third Conclusion altogether; for if this silly Story should be but of the same Date with *Prior Robert's* Legend of *Wenefride*, yet might the Place where this famous Vestment was said to land every Year, be called, by the poor ignorant common People *Port y Cassul*, without rising to such a Height of Time backwards as *Beuno's* reputed Age is. But after all, there is no Mention of *Port Cassul*, or any *Port* at all, by *Robert*; tho' he be tediously particular in describing the sending, sailing, and arriving of this *Woollen Vessel*, with its rich Freight. The *Cotton-Life* calls it *Port-Sachlem*, with Reference, in all Likelihood, to the *Sack* or *Bag*, in which this precious Coat was wrapped up, it being observable that that Word *Sac* signifies the same thing in abundance of Languages. The Life of *Beuno* also is defective in this Point, there being no Mention made, therein, of the wonderful Conveyance of this yearly Present. But since the Editor says, That the uninterrupted Tradition from Father to Son, for so many Centuries, is a clearer Attestation of Fact, than if it had been recorded in written History, it must even pass; for I have nothing to say to things that are to be believed, whether they be written, or whether they be not written: This solves all Objections indeed.



ry of Miracles. The *Port of the Vestments* solves the Objection from the Year 660 to this of 1712. As Apostolical Tradition is the unwritten Word of God, and by it we receive the holy Scriptures, and the sacred Interpretation and true Sense of them, as what regards Infant Baptism, &c. let it be lawful for me to say, that as to *Human Faith*, uninterrupted Tradition from Father to Son for so many Centuries, is a clearer Attestation of *Faith*, than if it had been recorded in written History.

After St. *Benno's* Decease, St. *Wenefride* began to feel in her Soul clear Illustrations and strong Impulses for removing from the Monastery where she was. She had the Comfort to see her Religion so well grounded in Perfection, that her Presence was not necessary; wherefore in the End of the seventh Year of her Government, (as the Saint had foretold her) she took Leave of her spiritual Children and of her loving Parents. 'Tis easily imagin'd, that as the *Virgin Martyr* was under a severe Trial at the Departure of St. *Benno*, whom she call'd her Father; in like Manner these noble religious Virgins had heavy Hearts and flowing Eyes, when they understood that their dearest Mother was fully resolv'd to leave them. To compose and quiet them, she declar'd that it was the Will of God, and as they had submitted unto her, they ought to shew undisturb'd Obedience to their heavenly Spouse; that all things ought to be welcome, coming from his fatherly Hand, and appointed them by infinite Wisdom. So, having compleated necessary Orders, she embraced each of the Sisters, and chose one of them for a Companion in her Journey. Before her Departure she went down to visit the Place of her Martyrdom; where falling upon her Knees in fervent Prayer, she humbly besought the Creator of Heaven and Earth to direct her in this new Pilgrimage, and likewise to increase his Blessings on such, who in a devout Manner should visit that Well, where for his Honour she had suffer'd the Loss of her Life. The many Miracles in subsequent Ages, gave clear Testimony that her charitable Petition had the gracious Assent of him who is the Bestower of all good Gifts.

St. *Wenefride* having recommended to God her Monastery of *Finhon*, her Parents, and her Friends, (o) Divine Pro-

(o) The Editor of this Life, grows somewhat scrupulous in this Part of the Work, dares not express himself so freely as he

## The Life of St. Wenefride.

Providence directed her to the Cell of blessed *Deifer*, eight  
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should, nor do that Justice to the Saint of *Bedvarry*, that *Robert* and the *Jesuits J. F.* have done. He talks of *Providence directing Wenefrede*; whereas the original Work says, That having passed the whole Night in Prayer and Watching, she heard a Voice from Heaven, that said distinctly to her, 'Take thee only one Maid for thy Companion, and go to blessed *Deifer*, who lives in a Place that is called *Bedvarry*, and he shall tell thee what thou art to do, and whither thou must go: For the Man was great in the Sight of God, and walked in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless; and of him, it is said that he was mighty in working Miracles, and that among the rest, he caused a Well to rise out of the Earth, and stretching out his Hands over it, he prayed to God, that whatever sick Person should wash therein, he might return home safe and sound; which many People have experienced to their great Comfort, and had their Healths restored by it.

I confess, that when I read Monkish Relations, I am ever more suspicious of the *Deifer's* and the *Deicola's*; but in this Relation I take him for as true a Saint, as *Wenefrede* her self, and know not why his Story should be smothered, or his Will neglected. I will not however trouble the Reader with the Miracles said by *Robert* to be done by him; but observe, that as *Wenefrede* was inspired by God to go to *Deifer*, yet when she came thither, he knew nothing of the Matter; but told her that he would that Night consult with God, by Prayer, who might perchance reveal that Matter to him: And so it came to pass, for towards the Morning, a Voice from Heaven directed him to tell the blessed Virgin, that she must needs repair to *Heillan*, where one *Saturnus* should inform her what she was to do, and to what farther Place she was to go: *Saturnus* was, it seems, better provided for her Reception, and having been instructed of God before-hand, told her (but not before they had passed the whole Night in Prayer and holy Conferences) that she must next resort to one *Elerius*, who was a holy Man, and lived at a Place called *Gwitheryn*, where she should be instructed fully in the Will of God. What excellent Work is here, for Inspiration, and Divine Impulses! Warned of God, to go from *Holy-well* to *Bedvarry*! warned of God, to go from thence to *Heillan*! warned of God, to go from *Heillan* to *Gwitheryn*! a Course, as I guess, of about 16 Miles in Compass. *Wenefrede* inspired to go to *Deifer*, *Deifer*, at length, inspired to send her to *Saturnus*; and good *Saturnus* inspired to send her forwards to *Elerius*, and *Elerius*, at last, inspired to tell her she must be first a Nun, and then, in God's good Time, an Abbess, at *Gwitheryn*! I do not so much as dispute whether *Deifer*, *Saturnus*, and *Elerius*, be right old British Names or not, but stand amazed that Pilgrims should be taught to think, that the blessed Spirit is thus employed.

Miles distant from the Holy Well. This Recluse was much in God's Favour; and Robert, Prior of Shrewsbury, recounts of him several evident Miracles, which for Brevity are here omitted, because my sole Intention is to set forth the Merits of our glorious Patroneſs of Wales. The holy Man told her that God had not made any thing known unto him as to her Journey; but have Patience (ſaid he) this Night, and I will inquire after his bleſſed Pleaſure. St. Deſire ſpending the Night in Prayer, according to his Cuſtom, heard a Voice towards Morning, which ſaid, Tell my dear Virgin Daughter Wenefride, that ſhe repair forthwith to the Village Henthlant, where the venerable Saturnus will fully inſtruct her as to the Place of her Abode during Life. Deſire acquainted her with his Commiſſion, and likewiſe aſſur'd her, that this holy Neighbour (ſo he call'd him) would be enabled from Heaven not only to ſatisfy her where to fix, but likewiſe he would inform her of other things relating to her ſelf. After that, he directed her in the Way to St. Saturnus.

It pleas'd Almighty God to honour the Virgin's Progreſs by revealing the ſame to ſeveral Saints, and the Occaſion of her Journey. Amongſt the reſt was St. Saturnus, who gave her a charitable Reception at Henthlant. Great Part of that Night they ſpent together in Prayer and holy Conferences; and to her great Conſolation he entertain'd her with many ſpiritual Lectures. He acquainted her in the Morning, that there was a Place not far off, call'd Witherniat, (now vulgarly Guitherin) which was enrich'd with precious Reliques of many glorious Saints, who had liv'd and dy'd there; and on this Account it was highly revered by devout People. This Place (ſaid he) is appointed you by Divine Providence for your Temporal Sojourning upon Earth: You'll find there a holy Abbot, by Name Elerius, who is of ſo great Martirification, and of ſo great Union with God in Prayer, that he's entirely dead to the World. I am order'd to ſend you to this Man, and farther to let you know, that you'll experience under his Conduſt a Celeſtial Tranquility of Mind. You'll likewiſe find there a Monastery of chaſte Virgins, who have been train'd up from their very Infancy in ſolid Virtue. You are deſtin'd by Heaven to improve them more in Perfection by your Example and Inſtructions. In Proceſs of Time theſe Religious will ſubmit themſelves unto you, as to a Mo-

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ther and Abbess, who is sent providentially unto them by their heavenly Spouse.

St. Wenefride was transported with Joy, hearing this agreeable Relation of her Happiness so near at hand. She most humbly begged his Blessing, and Directions how to finish her Journey. The holy Man, out of Respect and Reverence, accompanied her himself part of the Way. At parting he gave her his Blessing, and ordered his Deacon to conduct her to St. Elerius. 'Twas no small Comfort to her that she was travelling towards a Monastery of pure Virgins; and there to enjoy their Angelical Conversation.

Gutherin is now a Village, whatever it was in former times, in Denbighshire, near the River Cluide, which separates this County from that of Flint. St. Elerius had here his Monastery in a Vale called *Vallu Clutina*, where several Religious Persons of both Sexes embraced his Institute, and followed his Example.

The holy Abbot had a Revelation of her Coming, and of her distinguishing Merits; therefore to honour her, he met her at some Distance, and led her to the Church. After they had pray'd a while together, he took her aside from the Deacon and her Companion, telling her, that he was no Stranger to that Heroical Act of suffering a violent Death to preserve her Virginity; that the miraculous Fountain was an evident Testimony of it; and that he would chearfully assist her in the Designs of His Divine Majesty intended by this her Journey. The Virgin reply'd, That as to herself, she had only this to offer, That as she had been guided by God's Holy Spirit to find him out, so in the future Course of her Life she would be an obedient Child in hearing and observing his Directions.

The holy Abbot was extremely edify'd at this humble and modest Answer. He told her, That if she pleased, they would spend that Night in Prayer, for greater Security in this important Affair. This they did; and he having received clearer Lights from Heaven, was replenish'd with incredible Joy, and told her in the Morning, That Almighty God would not be wanting to increase His Fatherly Love towards her. Without saying more, he led her out of the Church to the Monastery which was under his Government, and he spoke thus to the Religious Virgins.

Rejoice, dear Children of God, for that it hath pleas'd your Heavenly Spouse to send a New Star of wonderful Brightness to shine amongst you. He has provided you such a Companion as will enrich your Souls with the Treasure of Religious Perfection, by the Pattern she'll set before you. This is the renowned Virgin Wenefride, who, as you have heard, suffered a glorious Death in Defence of her Chastity. This is she whose Triumphs are recounted in Churches, and whose Trophies illustrate the Province where she lived. Rejoice therefore, because she is come to remain and end her Days amongst you. Happy is her Arrival! Preserve carefully this inestimable Treasure. Mark and imitate the Example she'll shew you, and give Attention to the spiritual Documents she'll deliver, because for this Christ has sent her. Having uttered this Speech to the Religious in general, he address'd the venerable Abbess Theonia with these few Words: To you, dear Mother, after a more special manner, I recommend a respectful Entertainment of this sacred Spouse of Christ, who by directing her hither has signally regarded and regaled your Family. After this he withdrew, leaving St. Wenefride amongst them blushing, and as it were sinking under the Burthen of her own Praises.

Not only Abbess Theonia, (p) who was a very holy Woman, but St. Elerius also held frequently private Conferences with St. Wenefride; and discoursing of Heavenly Mysteries and vertuous Practices, they discovered her to be so clearly illuminated in the first, and so solidly grounded in the second, that both of them admired the rich Treasury of her Soul. When the Abbot return'd to his Monks, who lived not far off in austere Discipline, 'twas his Custom to magnify the Merits of this Stranger, and seem'd not able to express what was due unto her.

At length the Fame of her Sanctity was so much divulg'd, that numerous Crowds of all Callings flock'd to Guisericin to behold a noble courageous Creature, who to secure her Virginity had suffered the Loss of her Head, and who after Death, to the greater Glory of her Spouse, by a holy Man's Prayer, had returned to Life. They importuned her to shew the pure white Circle round her Neck, which

(p) The Editor conceals from his devout Pilgrims, that the Abbess Theonia (another Welch Name to be sure) was the true and natural Mother of Elerius (as Robert affirms more than once) not out of Respect, I fear, to undefiled Marriage.

which she industriously declined, till at the Request of her Sisters she yielded to their pious Desire, lest she should seem to affect Humility. The glorious Sear forced Tears of Compunction from their Eyes, by reflecting how Heroically and with what Fortitude she received the mortal Wound from the Sword of cruel Cradocus, rather than once to offend her God, and how often they had shewed their Weakness in complying with the first Suggestions of the Infernal Enemy, and shameful Proposals of a wicked Companion.

St. Elerius going one Day to the Monastery to visit the living Martyr, and to confer with her in Spiritual Matters, they entered occasionally on the Subject of the Happiness of dying well. He told her, That he often took Complacency in the Thoughts of having her near him when he lay on his Death-Bed, and that after his Departure her Prayers would afford him Relief for the Repose of his Soul. No Father (said she Prophetically) Christ hath appointed otherwise. You shall live to bury our dear Mother Theonia, and a few Years after to bury me: Then some Time being expired, your self shall pass from this transitory World, and go to Him, of whose Kingdom there is no End. All this came to pass as the Saint foretold.

Soon after this Prediction Theonia was visited with her final Sickness, and finding herself near her End, she received from Elerius's Hands the Blessed Sacrament, as her Viaticum to conduct her safely towards Heaven. The Religious were on their Knees round her Bed, lamenting bitterly the foreseen Loss, whom she comforted after this manner: Children! Tears are not to flow for Friends, or for our selves, unless some Evil hath happened or Misfortune. Our present Case hath no such Countenance: As to my self, I am hastening to my Heavenly Spouse, (as I hope) who calls me to Him. As to you, Blessed Wenefride, a more holy Mother, will succeed me, who by Words and Works will improve you in Perfection. Follow her Steps, and you will not wander nor go astray. Then being spent, she breathed out her pure and precious Soul. Her Obsequies being solemnly and christianly performed by St. Elerius, he appointed St. Wenefride Abbess, to govern the Monastery. Her profound Humility dissuaded her from undertaking the Charge, but the Obedience she had promised the holy Abbot, and the



the repeated Petitions of the *Sisters*, notwithstanding natural Reluctancy, wrought her at last into Compliance.

The nice Art of governing many, whose Geniuses and Constitutions are as differing as the Features of their Faces, is attended with such vast Difficulties, that Solomon being favoured and honoured by the Almighty with that unlimited Offer, *Ask what thou wilt, that I may give it thee*, 3 Reg. iii. 5. the considering King petition'd for what was most necessary to rule the numerous *Israelites*; he desired not Riches or Glory, but *Wisdom*, a *desirable Heart*; St. Wenefride was naturally prudent, and her *Sponse* bestowed upon her a more than ordinary Talent of Governing; so that wish'd for Success answered Expectation. He blest'd that Head with supernatural Wisdom, which had been sacrificed to his Honour. She made use of the same Maxims and Methods at *Guithrin*, as before she had done at *Finbou*. Her Commands were intimated with such Affability and Discretion, that they appeared to her Subjects so many Intreaties. She went constantly before the rest in the most painful Duties of the *Monastery*; and although the Dignity of her Office required due Distance, she not only conversed with her *Sisters* as with Equals, but also look'd upon herself as the least deserving in the whole *Community*. She had the true Spirit of Poverty, and was so much averse to Superfluities, that she would scarce admit of Necessaries. She was most rigid in Abstinence, and *Patience* had taken such absolute Possession of her Heart, that not the least Entrance was allowed to Anger and other inordinate Passions. Her Prayer was continual, when not interrupted by Duties of Charity and necessary Sleep. She was frequently favoured with *Raptures* and *Extasies*. She never dropped any Word tending to her own Commendation, and was sensibly afflicted when others mentioned any thing in her Praise.

The Blessed *Martyr* inculcated daily to her *Sisters* to have always before their Eyes the grand Example of their dear *Redeemer*, and to copy out such Vertues as He exercised, to instruct as well as to save them: That they ought to study a pure Intention in all their Actions, to serve God for His own sake. She earnestly recommended Fortitude and Perseverance as strong Armour to overcome all Sorts of Temptations: That they ought not to be dismay'd in these spiritual Conflicts, for by the Conquest they would obtain

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obtain the Crown. Prayer (she said) when well performed, did dilate their Souls, and prepared an Entrance to Divine Grace, which enabled them to undertake Noble Actions for their God. 'Tis needless to mention her Angelical Purity; the flowing Fountain seems to denote that she would have parted with Streams of Blood rather than to have consented to one single Thought to the Prejudice of her consecrated Virginity.

'Twas observed, that when she exhorted her Religious, a Depth of Heavenly Wisdom appeared in her Words, which inflamed her Hearers with the Love of Jesus. She was favoured with a special Gift of discovering Temptations, and of applying proper Remedies to defeat the Enemy. Not only the Laity, but even Religious Men and Prelates found great Advantage by conferring with her. Many resorted to Guitherin from all Parts of the Province. What is yet more, notorious Thieves and inveterate Malefactors were reclaimed from their evil Courses by her powerful Advice and irresistible Remonstrances.

Almighty GOD was pleased to declare by Signs and Miracles how much St. Wenefride was in his Divine Favour. Scarce any Day passed wherein, by sudden Cures of desperate Distempers, she did not comfort drooping and desponding Patients: Her Monastery resembled a common Refuge of the Distressed, and she was like a tender Mother to the Unfortunate. Her Heroical Vertues were the universal Subject of Discourse in private Families, and the Fame of her Miracles was heard from the Pulpits in Churches. St. Elarim, who was best acquainted with her Merits, declared openly, That Providence had directed her to Guitherin, to honour and benefit them all: But from humane Applause, which was abhorred by her to the last Degree, she was invited by a Revelation to the immortal Glory of Angels.

The Saint being thus forewarned of her long wish'd-for Departure, the welcome News, for whole Days and Nights, threw her into Extasies of Joy. She had made it her Study to forget, as much as possible, what she had done or suffered for her dear Lord; and therefore, as one who is to undertake a long Journey, she made necessary Provisions, as if nothing had been performed during the Course of her holy Life. She redoubled her Fasts and other Austerities; she fatigued herself in the painful

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Exercises of continual Charity towards her Sisters and others. Notwithstanding her Angelical Interior, and the uninterrupted Union with her Divine Spouse, she viliſy'd herself as one not worthy of his Presence. That she might not surprize the Community, by her leaving them in a short Sickneſs, (q) ſhe imparted firſt to St. Eleriſ the Summons ſhe had received from her Redeemer, and the ſame afterwards to her dear Sisters, whoſe Sorrow was little inferior to thoſe Transports of Jubilee ſhe was abſorb'd in, by the certain Assurance of paſſing ſpeedily to her Lord and Maſter. They wept, they mourned, but ſhe thus comforted them.

Weep not, dear Children, but conform your Wills to your Creator's Pleaſure. Doubt not but that in Heaven (whether through the Mercies of God I am going) I ſhall be more ſervicable to you by my Prayers, than here on Earth by my Presence. For that Land of Promiſe is not a Place of Ignorance, but of clear Knowledge, where the Bleſſed underſtand the Wants of their Friends on Earth; and they being united in the Fountain Head of infinite Charity, they are powerful and ready to procure ſpeedy Helps to ſuccour them. This I promiſe to do for you, my dear Children, after that Chriſt ſhall have taken me into His Kingdom. You muſt not be contriſted like thoſe who have no Hope. To wicked Worldlings, who by their ſinful Lives dread the Sight of a terrible Judge, Death appears like a cruel Executioner, to drag them to a formidable Tribunal; but to innocent and holy Souls Death is entertained as a welcome Gueſt; he finds them ready to embrace him with Joy: They are like Men expecting their Lord when he returns from the Marriage, St. Luke xii. 36. and are ready to go with him, as through God's Mercy, I hope that I am prepared at preſent for the Heavenly Journey to enter into the Joys of my Lord.

Her concluding Sickneſs took its Beginning from frequent and violent Convulſions, which ſhe endured with unparallel'd Patience. The lively Hopes of ſeeing her

(q) Robert ſays, that Eleriſ heard of it only by Report and Chance, after ſhe had acquainted her Nuns with it, and comforted them concerning it: But the Editor, having made Eleriſ to be her Confeſſor, durſt not venture her telling any thing of Importance to any one before ſhe had acquainted him with it, which is of good Uſe for thoſe who trade in ſuch Wares, and a right Intimation to devout Pilgrims.

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Heavenly Sponse sweeten'd all her acute Pains; yet knowing that the crafty *Tempter* is more furious in the decisive Conflict, she earnestly and often besought our Lord, that He would not permit the infernal *Enemy* to be frightful unto her in her last Agony. She exhorted all who came to visit her, to make early Preparations against that dreadful Hour, on which depended eternal Happiness, or never-ending Misery.

In the Beginning of November finding her Strength exhausted, and that her Dissolution was near at hand, she called for the Saint her Confessor, and was by him fortified with the Holy Sacraments of the Church. Beholding the Religious in Tears upon their Knees, she said, Dear Children, rather congratulate with me, than grieve so much at my approaching Happiness. I hope I're long to enjoy him in Heaven whom I have ardently loved upon Earth. Preserve inviolably the Promise you have made Him: Undervalue the base and sordid Pleasures of this transitory World; reflect that your Bodies, although beautiful and in their Prime, are no other than loathsome Prisons, which detain your immortal Souls in close Confinement. Take great heed not to defile them, and never forget this important Lesson, that the Heavenly Comfort and Joy which pure Souls experience on their Death-Bed, recompences abundantly all worldly Riches, Pleasures, and Honours which they have despised and abandoned for the Service and Love of Jesus Christ.

The Saint, as it were, knowing the very Minute of her Departure, took her last Leave and Blessing of holy Elerius, hoping that they would meet soon in Heaven, without any Fear of a future Separation. She humbly requested that her Body might be bury'd near unto Theonia's, her holy Mother; then in a pure Act of intense Love of God, on the 3d of November, she breathed out her thrice happy Soul into her blessed Redeemer's Hand.

Elerius observing that she had expired, as the Religious also did, who were kneeling near her Bed, the many deep Sighs published their Loss. The Holy Abbot found himself obliged to suppress his own Grief, that he might more effectually comfort them, by declaring that she was only removed to Heaven before them, and that they ought to prepare to follow after her: That she was united gloriously to her God, and by her Prayers would powerfully assist them. Her Body was very little alter'd

in the Comeliness of it by her Death; and as she had desired, 'twas solemnly interr'd near *Theonia's*, and many other *Saints* bury'd before her in that Place: Amongst the rest were (1) *Cheb* and *Sennan*, the one lying at her Head, and the other by her Side. Both these were renown'd for Sanctity and Miracles, and had Churches rais'd to their Memories. Yet altho' these two, and many other *Saints* Bodies, which had been committed to that holy Ground, drew thither devout People; yet the Place was mostly revered and honoured for St. *Wenefride's* Sepulchre, which was afterwards favoured by a Train of evident Miracles. Not long after St. *Elerius*, by a happy Death, finished his Course, and went to receive the eternal Reward of his Apostolical Labours. His Body was interr'd in a Church erected to his Name and Memory, where it pleased Almighty God to work miraculous Cures, in Testimony of his Sanctity on Earth, and Power by his Prayers in Heaven.

The Omnipotent, who has assured Mortals by his Divine Promise, that *those who glorify him, he will glorify them*, 1 Reg. ii. 30. most eminently fulfilled the same in St. *Wenefride*, both living and dead. She glorified her Creator in her tender Years, by consecrating unto him her unspotted Virginity. She glorified Him like St. *Agatha* and St. *Agnes*, with the cheerful Offering of her Head, to preserve untainted Fidelity to her Heavenly Spouse. She glorify'd Him, by withdrawing noble *Virgins* from the prevaricating World, and raising their Souls to the pure Love of God, instructing them in the true Spirit of Humility and Mortification. In fine, she glorified Him through the whole Course of her Life, in all Points of religious Perfection, not only relating to her Subjects, but even the *Laiety*. On the other Hand, the Almighty has glorified her

(1) 'Tis an unreasonable Thing for a Monk to sow any one Church-yard so thick with Saints as *Robert* has done that of *Guitherin*, unless he intends to remove them in due time. *Kepy* was thought to have been bury'd in *Anglesey*, and *Senan* in *Ireland*, where he was Bishop, by the same Token that he died the very same Day with St. *David* in 544. But this Thief of a Monk has brought them both to a Place where he could come more easily at them, and pacify the People of the Parish better for the Loss of *Wenefride*, since they had so many *Saints* bodies still left with them.

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her down to the present Age, from the Year 680. According to St. Bruno's Prediction, there has been no Cessation of Miracles; testifying her signal Sanctity, and how dear her precious Soul is to her Maker. 'Tis true, this humble Virgin was accustomed to blush and to shed Tears at the first Sound of her Praises, and therefore desired and obtained that she might absent herself from *Flinton*, to live in Obscurity (as she resolved) out of the frothy Noise of Acclamations, which she could not avoid at the Place of her Martyrdom. This was her pious Contrivance, but the Design of Heaven was to glorify her at *Guiskerin*. As God commanded a Torrent to flow on that dry Valley, where her bloody Head touched first the Ground, so at her Sepulchre he did not reject or refuse any Petition made by her devoted Supplicants.

The Historians of her Life, St. (1) *Elerius* and *Salopiensis*, concluded that it would be an Undertaking to swell Volumes.

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(1) I think it fit to tell the Reader again, that *Elerius* never wrote one Line in his Life about *Wenefride* that any one knows of. *Robert* of *Salop*, that ought to have known (and would have told us if he had) says not one Word about him as to this Point: And the Editor might as honestly have said, that he himself had translated *Elerius's* Life, as say, that *Elerius* was her Historian. *Robert* does indeed say, that the Number of Miracles wrought at her Shrine and Fountain was exceedingly great. The Anonymous Writer of her Life (which I have called the *Cotton-Life*) makes all her Miracles to have been wrought at her Fountain, and not one at *Guiskerin*, where he leaves her buried. But the Observation I would make, both to the Pilgrim and the Protestant Reader upon this Head, is, That whatever Blessings God bestows upon People that pray in Places where there is no famous Saint worshipped and called upon, he bestows them for his own Goodness sake, and for his Mercy's sake in Jesus Christ, and in Compassion to his needy Creatures: But that whatever Blessing he bestows in Places where some famous Saint is worshipped and called upon, there they are all, it seems, bestowed upon the Intercession and for the Merits of that Saint, if they be so pray'd for and asked; and I believe it will not be denied, that not one Papist in a thousand does ever ask of God any great Blessing, but for the Merits, Sake, and by the Intercession of some one or more Saints. Hence therefore it must needs be, that the Blessings which Papists receive at God's Hands must be generally accounted miraculous, and those the Protestants receive mere Mercies and



lumes, if they registred all Wonders done at her Shrine and Fountain. They thought it sufficient to acquaint the Reader, that the *Blind Lepers*, and other diseased Persons, were perfectly cured, by drinking the *Water*, or bathing themselves in the *Holy Well*. This became so famous, that tender Mothers made no Difficulty of casting their sickly Children into the *Stream*, which was a speedy Cure. Such as lived at great Distance, and were tormented with Agues, and hot burning Fevers, caused the Water to be brought to them, and drank of it as a certain Remedy to relive them in their Maladies. Those in very remote Places used to put one of the little bloody Stones which was taken out of the *Well* into other Spring-Water, and they were cured. 'Tis said, that the *Virgin Martyr* herself prescribed the first Use of this last Remedy, who soon after her Second Death appearing to many, who in dangerous Distempers devoutly called upon her, she directed them for their speedy Recovery, to apply the Water and Stones of the *Well* in the aforelaid manner. Such as had Swellings or old Sores bathed the Part affected, and they found present Relief.

At this wonderful Spring almost daily Miracles were wrought, according to a Petition she made to God before the

common Blessings. This is the Spring of Superstition, this the Food and Nourishment of Saint-Worship. But I desire the serious understanding Papist to consider, and inquire, and then compute as well as he can, whether the Protestants or Papists of this Kingdom (in Proportion to each other's Number) receive more or greater Blessings, more Deliverances from Sickneses, or Pains, or Dangers from abroad, or sad Accidents at home. 'Tis certain that they pray alike for all the Good they think they want, and deprecate alike the Evil which they fear: But it is as certain that the Protestant asks what he asks, and deprecates what he fears, through the Mediation, and by the Intercession, and for the Merits sake of Christ only, without any Mention of any Saint or Angel, or the Virgin Mary, all which, or one at least, are called upon and interested in every Papist's Prayer, tho' Christ be not excluded. If therefore the Protestants receive as many Mercies and Blessings, ordinary and extraordinary, at *Holy-well* (for Instance) as the Papists do, how is a Papist satisfied that any thing is granted him for the Sake of St. Wenefride, or through her Intercession?

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she left Finbon; that he would vouchsafe to bless corporally, and sanctify spiritually, all those who in future Ages should devoutly visit her Fountain, and there acknowledge the many Benefits with which he had favoured her. Frequent Miracles were likewise wrought at her Tomb. Multitudes of diseased Persons became perfectly cured by praying, and kissing the Earth where the sacred Remainder of her was deposited.

The holy Author of St. Wenefride's Life and Death was not satisfied with a general Relation of miraculous Cures; he descends to Particulars, that unbelieving Posterity might be induced to allow Credit to what he had recorded as to daily Wonders. I touch two or three with Brevity: From the Beginning of the World is hush not been heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of one born blind, unless this Man were of God, St. John ix. 32. This declared the Omnipotence of the long expected Messiah; and the like Favour soon after our Saviour's Death, gave Wing to the Fame of her Sanctity and Power in Heaven, and spread the same through the Western Provinces of Britain. A poor Carpenter, dwelling not far from St. Wenefride's Well, had a Daughter born blind. She growing up, and groaning under that temporal Misfortune, hearing the Report of many miraculous Cures wrought at that Fountain, she importuned her Father daily to be handed thither. This was granted, and being come to the Place, she bathed her Head in the Water, and was afterwards conducted to the Chappel, near unto the Well. She spent that whole Night in Prayer, beseeching God, through the Merits and Intercession of St. Wenefride, who was martyr'd for his Love, to bestow upon her corporal Sight, to the End she might serve him better, and be an Eye-witness of the Wonders wrought in that Place. Towards Morning she fell into a Slumber, and when she opened her Eye-lids she found herself bless'd with perfect Sight. This being so notorious and publick, begat fresh Veneration to the Holy Well, and was divulged far and near, to his Honour who is glorify'd in his Saints.

The Saint's Privilege was not confined to her Well and Chappel, the adjacent Places were a sort of Sanctuary under her Protection; Witness what happened to some Thieves, who stole a Cow out of a Pasture near unto St. Wenefride's Chappel. The Robbers forced her over rocky Ways,

Ways, that they might not be traced; but it happened otherwise; for the Cow fixed not one Step without leaving a (u) deep Impression in the Stones, as if she had been passing through soft Clay. The Footsteps also of the Thieves so visibly appeared, that the Owner next Morning missing his Beast, he and his Neighbours followed after by the miraculous Track. The Robbers perceiving them near at Hand, made the best of their Way to escape, and left the Booty to whom it belonged. They afterwards observed at Leisure how the Cow had left the clear Prints of her Feet as she was carry'd off, but not the least Impression after she was retrieved and returned homewards. Great Crowds of People flock'd to behold the said Prints in the Stones, and published the Miracle. The Thieves themselves, apprehending lest some severe Judgment should befall them to terrify others, came penitently to the *Martyr's Altar*: They confess'd their Sin, and warned all not to commit the like Trespass.

Behold a following Example yet more terrifying. A Messenger being dispatched by a chief Lord of that Country, to give his Neighbours timely Notice of some approaching Danger from the bordering Saxons (who continually carry'd on War against them) was way-laid by Thieves, and pursued to St. Wenefride's Church, whither he fled as to a safe Sanctuary. The Express fasten'd his Horse near unto the Door, which they took away, not presuming to pursue him to the Altar, where he stood for Refuge. After their Departure the Messenger came forth, and finding that the Horse was carried off, he returned into the Church, and, prostrate, made a pious Complaint before the *Saint's Altar*, that he indeed had sustained a considerable Loss, but it was she who was highly injured: That the Authors of the Crime deserved  
exem.

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(u) I confess, I thought the Editor would not have given us this Miracle, it is so notable a one; but since he has been so fair, I cannot chuse but thank him for his Ingenuity, and will not find any Fault with him for not expressing how deep the Impression was that the Cow's Feet made in the Rocks every Step she took, which Robert says was up to the Knees; which, considering how hard the Welsh Rocks are, is very deep indeed; but what of that? Know we not who it is that cleaves the hard Rocks asunder? Is any thing too hard for God?

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exemplar Punishment, to the End others might be deterr'd from violating the Safety of her Sanctuary, and the Reverence due unto it. His Remonstrance was accepted of by Divine Justice; for the *Thief*, who had untied the Horse, and had him in actual Possession, was suddenly seized all over his Body with such Extremity of Pains, that he often called on Death to deliver him from the Torture. After a few Days, his Right Arm, (which was the Instrument of his Sin) began to swell, then to putrify and rot in a loathsome manner. This Tribulation gave Understanding to him, who had neglected Conscience in time of Health. Wherefore he came to her Church, and begged, with many Tears, the *Saint's* Pardon for his Insolence, and the Wrong he had done her. He became a true *Penitent*, and this Humiliation so much deserved her Favour, that by Degrees he was cured of his painful Ulcer. He praised God for his Mercy, and St. Wenefride for her Compassion, preaching to others not to offend against the Sanctity of the Place, nor to give Disturbance to the *Saint's* Clients, who in Distresses run unto her for Succour.

Take another Instance in a Passage which may seem of less Moment. A *Labourer* presumed to cut off for his own Use a Bough from an old Oak growing near unto *Gutherin* Church-Door, which afforded a convenient Shade to devout *Pilgrims*, when the Concourse was so great that they were forced to remain without, and to pray under it. No sooner had he struck his Hatchet into the Bough, than it was immovably fixed there; and as *Jeroboam's* Hand withered, which he had stretched forth to order the Apprehension of the Man of God, that he was not able to draw it back, 3 Reg. xiii. 4. so this poor Man's Hand and Arm cleaved so fast to the Handle of the Ax, that with all his Strength he was not able to separate them. He attempted often in vain to let go his Hold, and finding himself in that surprising Distress, he cry'd out for Help and Assistance. Some Persons hard by heard his mournful Voice, and ran to the Place, admiring at the Wonder. They exhorted him to repent, and to beg the *Saint's* Pardon and Prayers, which he did, and at the same time they all cry'd out, Holy Wenefride, take Pity on him! At these Words his Hand and Arm were set at Liberty, and were restored to their former Freedom. The Cut in the Branch was shew'd to

to Robert, Prior of Shrewsbury, when he came to translate her sacred Reliques, of which I am going to give an Account, with the Occasion of the Removal.

In the Reign of King William the Conqueror, a chief Earl of his Court, called Roger, built a (x) sumptuous Monastery in Shrewsbury, to the Glory of God, and the Benefit of that City, endowing the same with sufficient Revenues. An Abbot and his Monks being therein settled, they began to lament the Want of holy Reliques in their new Church, which Wales was stored with most abundantly, by reason that many eminent Saints of both Sexes had formerly flourished in those Parts, renowned for Sanctity and the Grace of Miracles. Hereupon they began to consider and consult what Saint's Body might be obtained by them, to bring a Blessing upon the Religious Family. During this Deliberation, a Monk of their Monastery fell dangerously sick, and moreover was so distracted in Mind, that his Brethren, both in Shrewsbury and Chester, ceased not to recommend to Almighty God his Recovery. One Day, when the vertuous Sub-Prior of Chester-Abbey had ended his Prayer for the miserable Creature, he dropp'd into an unusual Sleep, to whom a Woman appeared in glorious Attire, and said, If you desire the sick Man's Health, let one of you go and offer for him a Mass in the Chappel near unto St. Wenefride's Well, and he will presently recover. After which she vanished out of his Sight.

The Sub-Prior Radulphus (that was his Name) awaked in great Amazement, but was backward in saying one Word of the Vision, fearing that it would not find any Credit. But when he heard that his Brother's Distemper grew more desperate, Charity obliged him to declare what he had seen. All the Religious were of Opinion, that St. Wenefride (y) herself had given these Directions.

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(x) So far from sumptuous, that Ordericus Vitalis says it was but meanly endowed; and W. Malmesbury, speaking of the Founder, says, *ibi Monachos locavit ex Sagis* (Says in Normandy) *angusti visu & amictu*; and Robert is as modest also. In After-times it was sumptuous enough.

(y) 'Tis strange that the Saints, who whilst they live are the humblest Things on Earth, and farthest from affecting Praise and Honour, should in the other World become the most ambitious and desirous of being known and worshipped

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Wherefore they immediately dispatched away Two of their Company, who celebrated Holy Mass in her Chappel, and at that very Time, as it was calculated, the Shrewsbury Monk was restor'd to perfect Health. On this Account both he and the other Monks became more tenderly devoted to the Virgin Martyr.

Robertus Salopiensis spends seven Chapters in relating what Methods were taken, that happy Success might answer their zealous Intention. I epitomize, yet will not omit any thing which appears to me very material. The Abbot and Monks of Shrewsbury persisted with great Constancy many Years in their earnest Desires and fervorous Prayers, to obtain the Treasure of St. Wenefride's sacred Reliques. In the Reign of King Henry the First a Grant was given of them, but by Reason of many Commotions after the King's Death in that Country, the Business was not effected till the second Year of King Stephen's Reign, when Abbot Herbert in a Consult with his Monks, deputed Robert his Prior, and Richard an eminent Monk of the same Monastery, to pass into Wales to bring back with them the Reliques. To facilitate the Matter, before their Departure several Letters were transmitted to Friends in those Parts. They visited in their Journey the Bishop of (x) Bangor,  
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by their Fellow-Creatures; and yet this is the Character of a great Part of them, given by the Men who write their Lives. They frequently appear to some good Body or other, who little thinks of it, and tell them where they have been buried, where they would have a Chappel built, where their Prayers will be best heard, and whither they would be removed. Some good Lesson or other they still give, which evermore ends in their own Honour, though, to be sure, more to the People's Advantage.

(x) Robert says, that Guitherin was in the Bishop of Bangor's Diocese. 'Tis certainly now in the Diocese of St. Asaph; but in 1138 there was no Bishop of St. Asaph, and therefore the Bishop of Bangor might very probably have the Care of that Diocese also committed to him; though Robert's Words may be so construed as to signify, that at that Time there was no such Diocese as St. Asaph; and I am sure I cannot prove there was, by any History that is left us: For the first that appears is Gilbert, who was consecrated in 1143. But whoever was the Bishop, I wonder with what Conscience he could give way to the removing such a precious Pledge of the Divine Favour out of his Province.



and were directed by him to a principal Lord, who ruled in that Country, where the blessed Body was kept. The Nobleman understanding the Cause of their Coming, entertained them courteously, and said, that Doubtless God and the holy MARTYR has sent you to translate her Body to a Place where it will be more honoured. (a) I not only give my Consent, but I will also send my Servants to assist you. Were not I unavoidably detained by Business of Importance, I would presume to go with you in Person, and with my unworthy Hands I would deliver unto you those sacred Pledges of Sanctity.

This gracious Speech cheer'd up the solicitous Travelers, who were Seven in Number, viz. the two Priors of Shrewsbury and Chester, Richard the Monk, a godly Priest born in that Country, and three Attendants. They set forward towards the Saint's Sepulchre, and being come near unto Guitherin, they met a Man, who cast them into Dejection, but not into Despair of Success. He acquainted them in plain and positive Terms, that the Inhabitants having Intelligence of their Coming, and of their Intentions, were absolutely resolved to oppose them: That no Favour nor Power of any Mortal should prevail with them to permit their chief Saint's Body, Patroness of their Country, to be carry'd away by Strangers. These

(a) The Beginning of this Lord of the Country's Speech is this; I do not think that you and your Companions have taken all these Pains without the Appointment of God, and the Good-will of the Blessed Virgin: For it may be, seeing that due Reverence is not paid her by her own Country-men, she has a mind to be carried elsewhere, and to receive that Honour from other Folks which her own refuse to give her, either through Contempt or Negligence. It would be hard to reconcile this Passage with the great Esteem and Honour which the Monk says her daily Miracles had procured her throughout the whole Country; but therefore the Editor wisely passed it by, as he has also done abundance of Inconsistencies and Absurdities besides; which puts me in some Hopes that Pilgrims begin to look a little after the Things they are to swallow, and may in time open their Eyes, and see how they are used. And I heartily wish, that, for their Sakes, some one or other of their own Communion would faithfully translate this Prior Robert's History of Wenefride's Life and Death, and Miracles, and Translation to Shrewsbury, without either adding any thing, or leaving any thing out, but giving us the good Monk genuine and entire, as he is in the Bodley-Library, of which I have seen a Copy or two.

These few Words did so much dispirit them, that it seem'd necessary to have Encouragement from Heaven. Prior Robert lay conceal'd in a Farmer's House, and sent the Chester Prior and the other Priest to Guitherin, they being Men of Birth, and well known in that Country. Robert rising up at his usual Time to say Masses, was certify'd by a devout Man, who was one of his Company, how that Night a glorious Virgin had appear'd unto him, and had ordered him to acquaint the anxious Prior, that he should prosperously effect the Affair he came about, and by her Means, whose Honour he had espoused. Robert, something comforted with this Relation, after finishing Masses fell into a Slumber, and seem'd to see a former holy Abbot of his own Monastery, called Gosfrey, who thus revived him; Banish Fear, Brother Robert, of failing in your Design. Be of good Heart; for by God's Assistance we shall defeat those who oppose us, and we shall obtain what for many Years we have earnestly desir'd. This was more than sufficient to animate him in the Prosecution of his Journey, especially the other Prior having sent an Express to hasten them forward, because God had prosper'd their Undertaking.

Being arriv'd early in the Morning at Guitherin Church, and having prayed some Time before her Body, the chief Priest of the Parish came unto them, who kindly saluted them. They humbly begg'd his charitable Assistance, of obtaining the Saint's holy Reliques; which he easily granted them, as knowing before they came, the Will of God. For (said he) on Easter Eve last, I had a Vision in this very Place. Composing my self to rest, a beautiful young Man appeared unto me, commanding me to arise. I answered, that 'twas not yet the Hour for Masses; so he left me. Returning the second Time, when I was more oppress'd with Sleep, he bid me rise, as before he had done; but being very heavy, I replied that I would rise in due Time; and covering my Head with my Cloak, I returned to Sleep. In the third Visit he pull'd away my Cloak with Violence, ordering me to follow him without Delay, as I did, very much affrighted. He led me to the Saint's Shrine, and pointing at it with his Finger, said, Note well this Place, and also my Words. I do command thee, that if some Months hence Persons come to open this Sepulchre, and to carry away with them the Saint's Body, that thou hinder them not in their holy Design, but assist them to the utmost of thy Power; lest by resisting, thou

be punished (as I forget thee) for thy Disobedience, by some irremediable Sickness. After this the Angel vanished away.

The good Pastor was not wanting to his intimated Duty. He disposed the Owners of the Village to acquiesce in the Will of God, and ordered the Parishioners to repair to the Church. Prior Robert seeing such a numerous Assembly, spoke unto them by an Interpreter in this Manner, *I and my Companions are come hither by Divine Appointment, to obtain of you St. Wenefride's Body, that it may be honoured in our City and Monastery, both which are much devoted unto her. The Virgin her self (as your Pastor here present knows) hath by Visions manifested her Will; and she cannot but be displeased with those, who are so bold as to contradict what she desires should be done.* Great Attention was given to what he said, and they seem'd much inclined to grant the pious Request: One Man only oppos'd the Motion, and with a clamorous Voice declar'd, That they should never be deprived, by his Consent, of so great a Treasure: That the Saint had lived holily, and departed in that Place; her Reliques were now honoured by them, as they had been by their Ancestors; and that Almighty God had approved of the Peoples Devotion at her Shrine, by frequent Miracles. This Man was of an avaritious Temper, and mov'd to be so violent, not out of a Motive of Piety, but Lucre. (b) However, after many Consultations, at last, they all unanimously consented, that St. Wenefride's Body should be delivered to the Monks, to be translated to Shrewsbury.

The Prior, and his Companions, return'd their most humble Thanks, and without losing Time, desir'd to enter the holy Isle, where the Saint's Shrine had been visited for many Ages by devout Pilgrims. Robert with his

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(b) Robert, and J. F. the Jesuit, his pretended Translator, tell us fairly, that they were fain to stop this Fellow's Mouth, by giving him Money. The Editor was afraid of this, as thinking it disgraceful, that after so many heavenly Visions, of Wenefride to Ralf the Sub-Prior of Chester; of Wenefride to one of Robert's Servants; of Abbot Godfrey to Prior Robert himself; and of an Angel to the Parson of Gutterin; to further and assist the Translation of these sacred Bones, it should not be effected without Corruption and Bribery at last.



Company being come before the sacred Reliques, sung joyfully to Almighty God Psalms of Thanksgiving. They wrapped up decently her Bones in the finest Linnen, which was brought by them on that Account; and after a Repetition of grateful Expressions to the Pastor and to the Inhabitants, they proceeded that Night towards Shropshire. In the Way homeward they cured a sick Man, who was tortur'd with a violent Distemper, by putting into Water a little of the Earth found in St. Wenefride's Head, and causing him to drink of it. This evident Miracle increas'd Veneration to those sacred Reliques.

Prior Robert gave timely Notice to his Abbot, that they were near at Hand with the desired Treasure, and he receiv'd Orders to deposite the same in St. Giles's Church, which stood near unto the Gate of the City, to the End that the Body might be brought to the Monastery in greater Splendor, by a solemn Procession of the Bishop, Clergy, and People. During its Stay there, Monks were appointed by Turns to pray Day and Night before the Altar, on which the Virgin's Bones were exposed. Multitudes of the Citizens of Shrewsbury joined with them in Prayer, and mutually congratulated each other for the Happiness of so potent a Patroness. St. Wenefride was not backward in requiting this devout Entertainment, shewing by several Miracles how acceptable the same was unto her. The following one is very remarkable.

A young Man had lain long in a miserable Condition; for his Limbs were so contracted, that he could not point a Foot, and his Head so much settled downwards towards his Knees, that he could not force it upwards, to lift an Eye to Heaven. He desir'd to be carry'd to St. Giles's Church, and to be set down before the Altar, on which stood the sacred Reliques. He spent that Night in Prayer, begging of God, by the Merits and Intercession of St. Wenefride, that he might be heal'd. Towards Morning he dropp'd into a Slumber, and before the Priest came to celebrate the first Mass, he awak'd, and found himself perfectly cured. This astonish'd the whole City, seeing him to walk as readily as any of the Inhabitants.

A Day being appointed by the Bishop, to convey the sacred Reliques from St. Giles's Church to the Monastery, Notice was given both to Town and Country, and withal, that such who assist'd, or were present at the Procession,

sion, would not only receive the *Bishop's* Blessings, but also would gain *Indulgences*, granted on the Account of the Solemnity. The universal Fame of Miracles, and St. *Wenefride's* Sanctity, drew together a Throng of People, who appeared in their best Apparels to honour that joyful Day. A little before the processional March, the Sky snow'd with dark heavy Clouds, and threaten'd immediate Rain: This Storm, ready to fall, contristated very much all devoted to the Saint, as foreseeing that many would withdraw themselves. The [*Salopien's* Lib. ii. Cap. xv.] Clergy and Monks besought earnestly the Omnipotent Disposer of all Times and Seasons, that he would please to grant dry Weather, for his own Honour, and of his Spouse, and for the Consolation of the congregated People, at least until the Procession was ended. Their Prayers were heard so effectually, that altho' violent Showers pour'd down in other Parts of the City, and adjacent Fields, not one single Drop fell into any Street through which the blessed Body was to pass. The thick Clouds hovered, and hung over their Heads, as gathered on Purpose to bring St. *Wenefride* miraculously to her new Possession of the holy *Benedictin* Monastery.

The Streets were lin'd with an incredible Concourse of devout People, who on their Knees shed Tears of Joy as the Body pass'd by, for so great a Blessing. These were the tender Showers, which fell in those Streets, excepted by Heaven from Rain. (c) The *Bishop* and *Priests* brought the Reliques to the Monastery, which were reverently receiv'd from them by the *Abbot* and his Monks, as inestimable Jewels. They were magnificently placed upon the high Altar, which was dedicated to the holy Apostles St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, where many Miracles were wrought for the Help and Benefit of Souls and Bodies. The Name of God be prais'd for ever and ever.

Hitherto I have followed *Robertus Salopien'sis*, who tran-

(c) The *Bishop* was not there himself, but sent them, as *Robert* says, full Powers for what they were to do, and his Blessing withal; so that the Procession went on as it should, and not a single Thread of any of the Company was wet, tho' it rain'd very hard in all the Country round: So graciously did God incline to hear the Prayers of the good Monks and Clergy, in Favour of the *Show*, and of the Peoples best Cloaths!

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lated St. Wenefride's Body from *Gaithuria* to *Shrewsbury*, in the Year of our Redemption Eleven Hundred Thirty and Eight.

Not only this City, but likewise other Parts of *Great Britain* became most tenderly devoted to the holy Virgin Martyr; which induced *Henry* Archbishop of *Canterbury*, in a Provincial Synod in 1420, to appoint the Feast of St. Wenefride to be solemnly kept all over *England*, with an Office of nine Lessons, on the third Day of November, *Lindewade*, Fol. 76. *Alford*, Anno 1138.

'Tis astonishing, and likewise deplorable, to hear some Persons decrying Miracles, and ridiculing them with so great Boldness and Contempt, that in Despite of holy Doctors of the Church, and religious Writers, they represent *Jesus Christ* as one unfaithful to his solemn Promise to future Ages; and they obstinately maintain, that all Miracles had a full Period after the Apostles Preaching. (d) They assent without Hesitation to Pagan *Plutarch*, *Tacitus*, or *Suetonius*, but demurr, and doubt of the Authority of that eminent Saint and learned Doctor, St. *John Chrysostome*, who wrote a whole Book on the Subject of Miracles, *Lib. de Babyla M.* whence he infers, against the wilful Heathens, that *Christ* is God, who works such Wonders by the dry Ashes of his Followers. The Miracles register'd by St. *Augustin*, in his Book of the City of God; those of venerable *Bede* in his Ecclesiastical History; what St. *Jerome* says of St. *Paul* the first Hermit, and St. *Hilarion*; and St. *Gregory* the Great in his Dialogues, are Matter of Mirth to these profane Drolls. They don't attend what Master they seek to please, by imitating the obdurate Jews, who, to discredit the Miracles of the Son of God, gave them a malicious Turn, saying, In *Beelzebub* Prince of Devils, he casts out Devils, St. *Luke*, xi. 15.

Our invincible Heroine, the glorious Virgin Martyr, St. Wenefride, has not met with kinder Quarter: For after the Plunder of her rich Shrine, and the scattering of her blessed

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(d) The Pilgrims may be confident, that no understanding Protestant did ever maintain, that Miracles ceased after the Apostles Preaching. They never did, nor ever will cease, whilst God is able to work them: Let them be well proved, and no Body will deny them.



sed Bones, her admirable Life must be list'd with the *Monkish Legends*; (c) her evident Miracles are fabulous Narratives; and the stupendious Cures wrought at her *Well*, are nothing else but the experienc'd Effects of a *Cold Bath*. To the greater Honour of God, who has honour'd this *Saint* to a wonderful Degree, I will instance a few late Miracles, and refer it to the *truly Christian Reader*, whether the watry Element could influence such uncommon Changes. I will not travail further back than the last Age, lest it be objected, that many things are asserted, happening long ago, which may rationally be disbeliev'd, but cannot be disprov'd. The original Attestations at this Moment lie before me; and where I do not abbreviate (some Cures being worded after a prolix Manner, as to Circumstances) I will deliver what I offer, in the very Expressions of the authentick Records. They are taken from Eye-Witnesses, who were Persons of tender Conscience and nice Honour, sometimes given in under their own Hand-Writing.

In the Year of our Lord God One Thousand, Six Hundred, and Six, Sir Roger Bodenham, Knight of the honourable Order of the *Bath*, after a tedious Quartan Ague, had a gross Humour settled in his Legs, which soon after broke out into an apparent *Leprosy*. He made use of many able Physicians, but depended most on Doctor John David Rhys, a *Cambro-Britain*, who commenced Doctor at *Sienna*, profess'd Physician at *Padua*, was Practitioner in divers Parts of *Italy*, and afterwards in *England*. He was

(c) If the admirable Life of St. Wenefrede, be not a *Monkish Legend*, there never was a *Monkish Legend* in the World. 'Twas Robert the Monk, that wrote it, 500 Years after her Death, and is not able to vouch for the Truth of any Matter of Fact in it. 'Twas John of Timmouth the Monk, that abbreviated it, and put it into his Legend 200 Years after Robert; and 'twas John Capgrave the Monk, that put it into his alphabetical Legend, 20-100 Years lower still: And I do not know a sillier, worse told Story, in all his Book, than this of *Wenefrede*; and I am perswaded that very few Scholars can be otherwise minded if they read it. And I say the same thing of the Miracles she is said to have wrought, by Robert the Historian; if there be any Rules of judging which Narratives are fabulous, and which not, I appeal to them in this Dispute.

near sixty Years of Age when Sir Roger consulted him. This learned Man ran thro' all Remedies that Concern could suggest, or Art devise, without any Success or Ease to the Knight. He therefore advised him to lay the Case before the College of Physicians in London, which was stated very faithfully and learnedly by the aforesaid Rhes, and was carry'd up by Mr. Thomas Beale, Steward of Sir Roger's Courts. The College at London being conven'd, the Case was read and debated, as also the Practice and Prescriptions of Doctor Rhes, which Beale deliver'd to them in Writing. They wrote back to Sir Roger their Opinion, That his Physician had hit right on his Disease, and had apply'd proper Remedies for a Cure: That he was a Person so eminently learned, that they acknowledg'd themselves his Inferiors, he having been Reader to most of them; and if the Method he took had no Effect, there was not in Nature any Cure for him. The Knight found not any Satisfaction by the Answer, which was penn'd to the Commendation of his Physician. Doctor Rhes being a Roman Catholick, advis'd his Patient to remove to St. Wenefride's Well, to try, whether by the Saint's Intercession he might not obtain a Cure, which was not in the Power of Art to effect. He acquainted him with the Holiness of the Place, and what miraculous Favours were there obtain'd. Sir Roger, extremely desirous of Health, obey'd his Physician, and undertook a painful Journey, full seventy eight British Miles from Rotherwas to Holy Well. He bathed himself in the miraculous Fountain, and became as sound and clean from all Scurf and Leprosy as a Child newly born, and afterwards continued so: This happen'd providentially; for as Naaman, Captain General of Syria, was directed to wash in the River Jordan, which compleated a twofold Cure, of his Soul as well as of his Body, in Kings, in like Manner the Loper, Sir Roger, came to wash in the Stream of Holy Well. He was not at that Time a Catholick; but the miraculous Cure, with other Motives of Credibility, induced him to embrace the true Faith, and he was reconciled to the Church of Christ; he rendred Thanks and Praises to Almighty God for both these Favours. Besides this Relation, which Sir Roger gave to the Lady his Wife, and to his Daughter-in-Law, Wife to his eldest Son, Mrs. Mary Bodenham, there were other Witnesses, the aforesaid Thomas Beale,

Beale, William Green and his Wife, Richard Bray, John Hen-  
ley, and many more. *Attendants* on Sir Roger Bodenham. (f)

The Omnipotent is more glorify'd in his Saints, by attributing supernatural Effects to their humble Petitions before his sacred Throne, than to natural Causes. Some Unbelievers, (if holy Scripture had not declar'd otherwise) might ascribe the Wholesomeness of the Waters of *Jericho* to an occult, sudden, and subterraneous Quality and Alteration, rather than to the Prophet *Elisha's* Miracle, by casting Salt into the Fountain, ix Reg. ii. 19. Worshippers of the great God have different Sentiments, as will appear by the following Relation. In the Month of December, and the Year of our Lord One thousand six hundred and thirty seven, Mrs. Jane Wakeman, Wife to Mr. John Wakeman of Rongley, in the Parish of *Horsham*, and the County of *Sussex*, was tormented with a sore Breast; and having used all probable Means for a Cure, she found no Ease or Prospect of growing better. The ablest Surgeons concluded, that unless her Breast was cut off, there was not any other way to relieve her; neither would they by that Operation give Assurance of a Recovery, for they verily believ'd that her Breast was incurable, and to attempt the Amputation, might hasten on the Gentlewoman's Death. They declar'd this to her Friends, but encourag'd her with better Hopes. Mrs. Wakeman

regard-

(C) Sir Roger Bodenham was, it seems, cured of a desperately sore Leg, by the Waters of *Holy-well*; and Mrs. Wakeman, of a sad sore Breast that was thought to be incurable. These are therefore good Proofs, that God worketh Miracles by St. Wenefride, or at her Intercession. This Editor is oft complaining against such as are Enemies to Miracles; but let me tell him, the People who vilify Miracles, are those especially who make them cheap and common. Are all the People that receive any great Benefit at *Holy-well* miraculously cured? or is it they are, is it St. Wenefride that does the Work? or is it certainly by her Intercession? What Pity it is, that some great Saint or other has not taken Possession of the Waters of the Bath, *Tunbridge*, *Strop*, *Junning*, and other Places? Great Cures indeed are yearly wrought at those Places, as much Experience witnesses; but not a Miracle among them all, because, forsooth, they are under the Protection of no particular tutelar Saints, to whom the Afflicted and Diseased address. Sir Roger turn'd Patient, therefore we hear of his Cure as miraculous.



regarded not their Opinion, with which she was privately acquainted, but resolv'd to have Recourse to Heaven, and to undertake a Pilgrimage to St. Wenefride's Well in Flintshire. She began her Journey from London in the Month of June, One thousand six hundred and thirty eight, accompanied by her said Husband, Mr. Richard Wakeman his Brother, and one Francis Nash. She had at that Time two great Holes in her Breast under the Left Pap, which were seen both by Catholics and Protestants. When she came into Woresestershire, to a Place call'd Beley, she left there behind her all her Salves and Ointments, having a strong Faith and Hopes in Almighty God's Mercy, and in the Prayers of blessed St. Wenefride, that she should not have any further Occasion of using them. She only apply'd clean Linnen, to keep her Breast sweet; for the Corruption burst out in so great Quantities, that it forced its Way thro' many Folds, and ran down into her very Shooes. Her Breast left off running at her first Bathing in the Holy Well. She stay'd one Night only in that Town, but went thrice into the Fountain, and from the very Instant of finishing her Devotions, to her Dying Day, which was five Years after, she never found any Pain in that Breast, nor any Sore, or Sign thereof, except a little Seam, to shew the Place where the two Holes were miraculously closed up. She bore afterwards three Children, and in drying up her Milk, found that Breast least troublesome, which before had been ulcer'd. I have this Account in Mr. Wakeman's Hand-Writing, which he gave, as a perpetual Testimony of the Favour, and also of the Passage which follows. (f)

In the Year one thousand six hundred and thirty, the aforesaid Mr. Wakeman of Rougley, &c. being at Holy Well, saw a Man lying dead, hard by the Well it self. This profane Wretch, the Day before, had much derided and scoffed at blessed St. Wenefride, who suffer'd a glorious Martyrdom in Defence of her Virginity; he also gave abusive and uncivil Language in the Presence of Mr. Wakeman, to the Pilgrims, who came thither to perform their Devotions. The Coroner was call'd, a Jury impanell'd, and the Body was view'd. After mature Deliberation they gave in this Verdict, That God's just Judgment was the Cause

*Cause of his Death, for his uncivil Carriage in that Place. (g.)* Thus Mr. Wakeman an Eye-Witness. I could add here the Names of such, who in the Year One thousand six hundred and thirty seven, order'd the Image of St. Wenefride to be defaced, and the Iron Bars to be taken away, which supported the pious *Pilgrims* in the rapid Stream; how both he who commanded it, and those who executed his Orders, contrary to the Persuasion of several moderate *Protestants*, were shortly after exemplarily punish'd by uncommon Misfortunes and Disasters. Moreover, had I not confin'd my self to the last Century, I could mention Precedents, more than sufficient, to caution Persons from being too forward in their Contempts of St. Wenefride and her Well, which is sometimes severely taken Notice of by him, who has said, *He that touches you, touches the Apple of mine Eye*, Zech. ii. 8. But let us return from this Digression, if it may be call'd so.

The infinite Wisdom of God thinks fit, not to work Miracles by the Intercession of his *Saints*, in all Places, nor towards all Persons, but as it pleaseth him, *St. Aug. Epist. 137.* The greatest Wonders are wrought at St. Wenefride's Well, but I relate here a Cure at a great Distance, which tends much to the Glory of our *Saint*. In the Month of June, and the Year of our Lord One thousand six hundred and forty seven, the Wife of John Cler, Gardiner in the Suburbs of the City of Worcester, being diseased, undertook on foot a Journey to Holy Well, hoping to find there the Recovery of her Health. Passing thro' Kidderminster, in her Way to Flintshire, she call'd at her Cousin Anthony Cooke's House. Having refresh'd her self, she acquainted her Cousin with the Occasion of this her *Pilgrimage*. The long Discourse on the Subject of Holy Well was over-heard by a sick Woman, who lay in the

(g) The Verdict of this Jury was ridiculous and false: For tho' no Man should abuse the *Pilgrims*, or speak contemptibly of a true Saint; yet how can any Man say that a sudden Death was judicially insisted on a Wretch by God, for giving ill Language? God's Judgments are a great Depth. God is righteous in all his Ways, and no Man suffers without deserving it; but it passes humane Skill, to tell when Sufferings are Judgments. But these are Stories fit to terrify an ignorant and superstitious Generation.

next Room. This poor Creature had continued bedrid six or seven Years; she was always lame, and had been put upon the said Cook (who was a Linnen Weaver) to be maintain'd at the Charge of the Parish. Just as the Pilgrim was taking Leave, and ready to set forwards, the bedrid Woman cry'd out to speak with her. The Business was this; She desired her for the Passion of Christ to carry for her a single Penny (which she gave her) to Holy Well, and to bestow it on the first poor Body she there happen'd to meet, humbly desiring that Party to go into the Well for her, and to pray that she might have the Use of her Limbs. This was promis'd and perform'd.

The poor Widow's two Mites, cast into the Treasury of the Temple, were so acceptable to the Searcher of Hearts, that he declar'd *she had given more than all together*. Luke xxi. 3. for it was her whole personal Estate. The opulent Scribes and Pharisees might sling in Handfuls of Gold, they found no Want; this poor Creature bestow'd on her God what seem'd necessary to relieve her self; perchance she saying at the same Time with a flaming Heart, *Lord if I was Mistress of the two Worlds, as I am of these two Mites, they should be employ'd to your Honour*. St. Wenefride accepted the single Penny sent to her Well, with so great Faith and Devotion; 'twas all the bedrid Woman had to present her with. Cle's Wife having remain'd at her Journey's End six or seven Days, return'd homewards, and coming to Kidderminster, she call'd at her Cousin Cooke's House, where to her great Astonishment, she saw the lame bedrid Woman perfectly recover'd; and inquiring at what Time she became sound, 'twas computed, that on that Day, and the very Hour when the single Penny was deliver'd at Holy Well, the bedrid Woman arose, walk'd round the House, and abroad, to the Admiration of the whole Parish. (b) This miraculous Change at so great Distance, could not be the Product of a Cold Bath.

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(b) The Story of this Bed-rid Woman's Cure, may be, every Word of it, true, and yet St. Wenefride be nothing concerned in it. Are all the Prayers that are put up at Holy-well, offered to God by Wenefride? or is all the Good that is done there, rewarded by God for her Sake? Happy Pilgrims! These are Encouragements indeed. There is nothing wanting but Truth.



This Passage was diligently examin'd by Mr. *James Bridges*, who had *Anthony Cooke* and *Cler's Wife* before him, who both attested the Truth of what is here related. In Testimony whereof Mr. *Bridges* recorded the same in his own Hand-Writing. This was the worthy Gentleman, who being *Sheriff of Worcester*, proclaim'd there the King in the Year 1651; for which he suffer'd much from the Rebels, and with Difficulty escaped the Gallows.

A languishing Patient perplexes the Physicians, and Distempers radicated from Infancy, causes him to fling aside his Books; and to dismiss the Hopes of a Cure. This seem'd the Case of *Mrs. Mary Numan*, Wife of Mr. *Hugh Numan*, who was Clerk to Sir *Jeremy Smith*, then Captain of one of his Majesty's Men of War. At five Years of Age, by an Ague and Fever, she was reduced to that Lameness and Impotence, that for the Term of eighteen Years she was not able to stand or point a Foot to the Ground: Her Arm Bones were so much out of their natural Places, that one reach'd over, and interfer'd with the other; and the Bones of her Legs were so dislocated, that they extended some Inches behind those of the Thighs. Being in this miserable Condition, and having considerable Friends at Court, she made her Application and Address unto them. By their Interest, she had the Opinion of all the King's Physicians, who declar'd, that naturally she was incurable. Hereupon she was touch'd by the King, but it pleas'd God not to restore her to Health. She was two Summers and one Winter at the Bath in *Somersetshire*, and at other Places in *England* famous for Cures, as also at three Wells in *Scotland*; altho' she could not make any other Shift for herself, than with great Difficulty and Pain to crawl a little upon her Knees. She was carry'd into *France*, and was put thrice into the second Grape-Press, in divers Parts of that Kingdom. She was touch'd at *Paris* by the French King: In *Flanders* she visited *Sichem* and other Places of Devotion; she was eighteen Weeks at *Aquisgrane*: In *Holland* she had the Advice of an Italian Prince, famous for his Skill in Physick. To be brief, she was conducted to the Baths in *Portugal*; all which Journeys were for the most Part at the King of *England's* Expence, but not to any Effect or Alteration in the Cripple. 'Tis true, She had been formerly twice at *St. Wenefride's Well*, without any Amendment, yet had an earnest Desire and

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and strong Impulse to make a third Pilgrimage. She was comforted with these inviting Thoughts both awake and sleeping; wherefore, towards the latter End of May, in the Year One thousand six hundred and sixty six, she began her Journey from London, and arriv'd at Holy Well on Wednesday in Whitsun Week, being the sixth Day of June, in the same Year. Going into the holy Fountain, she immediately felt (with much Pain) her Bones to move, and draw to their right Places; so that by the Help of others, namely Mrs. Degg of Wolverhampton (who with Mr. Paling her Kinsman, and other Pilgrims of Staffordshire, were at that Time in the Well) she was able to stand upon her Feet, which she had not done before (as is already said) for eighteen Years, and to walk a little in the Water. On Trinity Sunday she went the fifth Time into the Well, and afterwards walk'd without any Help of others; and on Wednesday following she undertook a Journey towards Ireland. This Miracle was attested, with all the recited Particulars, by her self, in the Presence of John Hughes de Combe and Robert Price de Adwyducha, as Witnesses to her Subscription. If the Cold Bath had an occult Vertue to restore her Limbs, it had been needless to return a third Time, being the former Visits seem'd to be made in vain. She had heard of St. Beuno's Prediction, concerning a third Payment of Devotion at that Place, and complying, she was blessed with the surprizing Cure. (i)

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(i) If the Cure of Mrs. Newman be to be accounted miraculous, because it was not effected by any of the Courses taken with her in England, France, or Portugal, or other Countries to which she travelled, no nor by being twice at Holy-well before, then certainly no Chronical Distemper can be cured without a Miracle; and the last Remedy that is applied must be that Miracle; and if applied at a Place where any famous Saint is worshipped, then is that wondrous Cure wrought by that Saint. But why was not Mrs. Newman cured by being twice at Holy-well before, if the Cold Bath be that which does the Feat? Ask your Physician, ask your own Experience; if the same Medicine has not succeeded at one Time, that would not at another? and if the same Means have not been often used, without Success, which have at last, through God's Blessing, proved effectual? But she had heard, belike, of St. Beuno's Prediction, concerning a Third Payment of Devotion at that Place, and complying, she was blessed with the Cure.

On the fourth of April, One thousand six hundred and sixty six, about five of Clock in the Afternoon, Hugh the Son of Thomas Williams, of the Parish of Wharfedale in the County of Flint, Yeoman, a Boy of eight Years and nine Months old, having a Body of just Proportion in each Part to the Height of his Stature, which was four Foot, and playing with one of his School-fellows near the Mill, which stands but at a little Distance from the holy Fountain, he attempted to skip over the Water, but came short of the other Side, and dropp'd into the Current, where 'tis most impetuous, three Yards from the great Water-Wheel, and was immediately carry'd out of Sight. The Strangers by gave him for lost, as prudently supposing, that besides the evident Danger of drowning, he would be crush'd to Death; for betwixt the Wheel and the paved Bottom of the Channel under it, there is not the Space of two Inches; yet he was suddenly convey'd into the Ditch beyond the aforesaid Wheel. His Companion seeing the sad Accident, and knowing nothing of his Safety, rais'd a mournful loud Cry, which so alarm'd the Master and forty Scholars, that they all ran out to learn the Occasion of it: The Miller also, and others, were in the same Fright; and being inform'd of the former's Distress, they all ran to the Ditch, and found him safe, and sound, and without any hurt.

prizing Cure. *Beune's Prediction* (if it must be call'd so) was, That whoever should ask to be delivered from any Evil or Disease, by her, should certainly be delivered at the first, or second, or third time of asking, if it were for his Good; but if he were not delivered at the third time from his bodily Sufferings, he might then expect to die shortly after, but might be assured of receiving greater Benefits to his Soul, which would be much better for him, than if he had received the Health or Blessing he sought for. But who does not see, that this is a Fetch of the crafty Monks, and not at all agreeable to the Simplicity of the Times in which *Beune* is said to have lived? If you do not succeed at first, come a second time, and then a third: The oftner Pilgrims come to *Holy-well*, the more the Monks are like to get by them, for I suppose they come not empty handed. But what if I do not succeed the third time? why then, I shall have a better thing, in another Place; so that still it shall be worth my While to come three times to *Holy-well*; and if I think so in good Earnest, then I shall certainly think my self obliged to leave something at the Altar, that the Saint may be the better serv'd by such as minister before her.

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but one *William Bowen*, who was standing with an angling Rod four Yards below the Wheel, espy'd him endeavouring to creep out of the Ditch, and complaining that he had lost his Shooe. The Boy was taken into a House, and that Moment a Surgeon was call'd: His Body being examin'd, the Youth was found not to have receiv'd any Crush or Contusion, except a little Skin ruffled off one Ankle, as a Mark to declare what would have become of him, if he had not been miraculously preserv'd. (k)

*Cornelius,*

(k) How the strange Escape of this Boy should turn to the Honour of *St. Wenefrede*, passes my Skill to understand; unless all the Mercies God bestows upon the People of that Town and Neighbourhood, must be owing to her Intercessions, Prayers, and Merits. But in this Case, she was not so much as asked or sought to: And yet I am willing to make the most I can of this Relation, and desire the *Pilgrims* to consider, that if *St. Wenefrede* does thus protect or intercede for such as never seek to her, nor know, 'tis likely, any thing of her, then Protestants may fare as well in their Ignorance, and tho' they address not to her, as those who believe her whole Legend, and pray to her every Day; which would be a discouraging thing indeed. And, to be serious, that I take to be the Truth of the Case. The Protestants *do not* pray to Saints, because they have no Command from God to do so; which is sufficient for their Justification, were praying to Saints never so innocent: God has left them, by his Silence in the Case, at their Liberty; 'tis therefore an indifferent thing, and they have chosen the Part they like. But farther, the Protestants *dare not* pray to Saints, for fear of provoking God to Jealousy: It looks so like to giving his Honour to another, (which he has certainly forbidden) that they are afraid of doing it. Supposing they are mistaken, is God offended with Mistakes of such a kind as this? Suppose that God is not jealous, is there no Ground to think he is? Can it displease the merciful and gracious Creator, to see his Creatures careful of offending him, by abstaining from such things, as neither Reason nor Revelation *command* them to do, nor yet *invite* them to? But will they not be hereby justly deprived of all the Fruits and Advantages that may attend and follow the Prayers and Intercessions of so many good and great Saints as are in Heaven? To this I answer, in a few Words, That if the Saints and blessed Spirits above, do pray, and make Intercession for the People that are on Earth, they do it either from their own Benignity and good Nature; or else, because they are ordered and appointed of God to do so. If of their own good Nature, then they will do it whe-

*Cornelius*, the Son of *John Nicholas*, of the Parish of *Tremaine*, in the County of *Cardigan*, about two Miles distant from *Cardigan Town*, being a young Man of seventeen Years of Age, both Fatherless and Motherless, entered into Service with his Aunt. On the one and twentieth of *December*, One thousand six hundred and seventy three, a little before Night, he was struck with so great a Weakness by a sudden Blast, finding racking Pains from his Knees downwards, that he was not able to go or stand. Several Remedies were used, as Ointments, Plaisters, Cutting and Lancing about the Toes and Ancles, to the very Bones. They continued this Method till towards *Easter*, but finding them insignificant, and that they were rather prejudicial to him, 'twas resolv'd to convey him to *St. Wenefride's Well*. His Relations were indigent, and having no other Means, he was recommended to the Charity of good People, from Door to Door, on a Hand-barrow.

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ther I ask or no, especially if they understand that I forbear asking, because I am afraid of offending God thereby, or because I believe they are at too great Distance to hear me, or believe they have no Power to help me; which are all of them very innocent Mistakes, if they be Mistakes, and such as they were liable to themselves whilst alive, and therefore such as cannot pervert the Goodness of their Nature, and hinder them from interceding for me, if they did so before. But if they intercede, because it is the Appointment and Will of God that they should do so, then they will never cease their Intercession till God appoint them to cease; and who can so far distrust his infinite Goodness, as to think he should command his blessed Servants not to intercede for those, who pray not to them, only because they find no Reason so to do, nor any Precept so to do, and think they should offend him by so doing? So that, upon the whole Matter, if the Saints do intercede with God, the Protestants must have the Advantage of their Intercession, whatever it is, altho' they do not pray to them; but if the Saints do not intercede, then are the Protestants upon the safer Side, because they do not pray to them. And this I say of *Saints*, that are certainly so, and as surely now in Heaven, as I am now on Earth, and do from my Heart truly honour their Memory, and bless God for their great Virtue, Sanctity, and good Example: But as for *Wenefride*, and *Beuno*, and *Eleriu*, and such like, I look upon them to be so far from being Saints, that I doubt much if ever there were such Creatures living on the Earth, as they are described to be.

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The *Welsh* distinguish themselves from other Nations, by a Cheerfulness in assisting those in great Necessity: They knew whither the Cripple was to be carry'd, and on what Account, therefore they lent helping Hands, that he might finish a Journey of ninety Miles. He was brought to *Holy Well* on the eleventh of June, and early next Morning was put into the Fountain, being Friday in *Whitsun-week*. No sooner was he in the Water, than he found himself perfectly recover'd; he walk'd in the *Well*, out of it, and ever after continued in good Health, to the Admiration of all those, who had been Spectators of his former miserable Condition. Glory be to God, who is wonderful in his Saints. (1)

It carries a sort of Demonstration for Miracles, when those who obstinately oppose them, are constrain'd to own them. Amongst the rest, perchance there are none more positive in their erroneous Opinions, than those Men call'd *Quakers*. They deny absolutely the Divine Efficacy of *Baptismal Water*, but the flowing Fountain of St. *Wenefride* prevail'd with *Roger Whatstone* to renounce his Heresy, and by holy *Baptism* to become a devout *Christian Catholic*. This *Roger*, by Education a *Quaker*, by Profession a Taylor, dwelling in *Sidmore*, within the Parish of *Bromesgrave* in *Worcestershire*, at sixty Years of Age, was visited with a violent Infirmary, which disabled him to such a Degree, that he could not feed himself. He was confin'd to his Bed seventeen Weeks, after which he found an Abatement of the severe Pains, which before ran thro' his whole Body. He was so weak, when able to rise, that he could not put his Hand to any Work, but halting on Crutches, he begged his Bread from Door to Door. Having continued three Years in this sad Misery, he was told by a *Flintshire* Man, dwelling in his Neighbourhood, that at a Place in his Country, call'd *Wenefride's Well*, great Numbers of lame Persons, and diseas'd, were frequently,

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(1) I leave it to the *Pilgrims* themselves, to consider, whether God is more wonderful in his Saints, because *Cornelius Nicopolis* was cured at the cold Waters of *Holy-well*, than he would have been, had *Cornelius* been cured at the hot Waters of the *Bath*, where neither *Wenefride*, nor any other Saint, is called upon, or worshipp'd in particular.



after a miraculous Manner, restored to Health: It came into the *Quaker's* Mind, suggested by a better Spirit than commonly guided him, that the Lord would help him at that *Fountain*. In this he was so confident, that not the least Doubt occur'd to the contrary: Wherefore, in the Year One thousand six hundred and sixty seven, he began his Journey on Crutches, attended by a young Girl, his Daughter; and after many Days Travel, he came to *Holy Well* about Noon, on the twenty eighth Day of *August*, in the aforesaid Year. He could not be induced to wash in the *Well*, that had a smattering of Popery and Superstition, but sitting at the Side of it, he drank one Cup of the Water, and he became as it were in a Trance: Returning to himself, he desir'd another Dish of the same Water, and having drunk it off, he threw away both his Crutches, and found himself *strangely, suddenly, and perfectly cured*. He walk'd round the *Well*, dropping many Tears of Joy, to join the Stream of that miraculous Spring. The Power and Goodness of *St. Wenefride's* [*see a Note at the End of the Book*] heavenly *Sponse*, placed the Miracle out of the Reach of Cavil and Dispute, by healing an old Cripple in a Minute, with two Draughts of Water. Another higher Cure was wrought in the Soul of this *Quaker*, for giving Attention to the Inspirations of the *Holy Ghost*, and an impartial Ear to the *Motives of Belief*, he embraced the *Roman Catholick Faith*. He and his Son (eleven Years of Age) received the holy Sacrament of Baptism, at which the greatest Quality of that County were pleased to stand *Patrines*.

Were it not to offer a needless Repetition of what is said already, I would set down at large the Attestation of *Robert Hill*, a most rigid *Quaker*, which lies now before me, concerning the Truth of the aforesaid Miracle. Have Patience at least with some Part of it, as he words it. I *Robert Hill*, of the County of *Worcester*, having lately been Overseer of the Poor of the Parish of *Bromesgrave*, within the said County, and now a near Inhabitant of the said Town, do testify, That I am, and have been well acquainted with *Roger Wiston*, alias *Whetstone*, of about sixty Years of Age, Taylor, Dweller in the same Town; and that I knew him for these three last Years lame and infirm, that he could not work at his Trade, nor go without Crutches, and so feeble, that he was not able to feed himself--- (Hill makes a Recital of his ten Days

Days Journey, and of his sudden Cure at the Well, as Whetstone related the same to him; then adds) For my own Part, I can well say that I knew him infirm and lame, often coming, in these late Years, on his Crutches, to beg at my Door; and now being return'd from Holy Well, is very strong, and well able to work at his Trade, to the great Wonder of the Inhabitants of Bromelgrave, some whereof, presensly upon his Return, being lame and infirm, came to Holy Well, in hopes to be also cured; and upon their Return they reported to me, that they were better in Health than formerly. Sec. ----- In witness hereof I put my Hand, the second Day of October, 1667. ROBERT HILL. In the same Account the said Robert Hill declares, how his own lame Girl, of fourteen Years of Age, was cured, by only making use of Holy Well Water.

I could bring a Cloud of Witnesses (to use St. Paul's Expression, Heb. xii. 1.) asserting other undeniable Miracles, wrought by St. Wenefride's Intercession, not in an obscure Corner, but in the Face of the Sun. I solemnly declare, that I leave behind twice as many Wonders, happening in the last Century, of which many were Eye-Witnesses, at the holy Fountain. Holy-Well seems to resemble, in some sort, the Probatica Pond, where, in five Porches, there lay a great Multitude of sick Persons, of blind, lame, and wither'd, St. John, v. 3. In the travelling Season the Town appears populous, crowded with zealous Pilgrims, from all Parts of Britain. The Well it self receives a Succession of Visitants from Sun-rise till late at Night. The many Hand-barrows and Crutches, which have been hung at the Pillars, demonstrate the Mercies of God, and the powerful Intercession of the Virgin-Martyr. They are soon remov'd by those who envy the Glory of our Saint. I forbear to recount at large the Recovery of blindish Eyes, of barren Women becoming fruitful, of inveterate violent Convulsions suddenly ceasing, of deaf Persons favour'd with Hearing, of stubborn Devils cast out of possess'd People (certainly the immortal Spirits, who suffer the eternal Torments of Hell, could not be forc'd away by the material Elements of a Cold Bath.) These, and many others of the last Age I omit, not to increase the Price and Bulk of a Pocket-Book, as also that it may be ready to wait on those to whom it is dedicated. St. Augustin, in his xii Book of the City of God, writing of a blind Man who received Sight, and

and of other Miracles, when St. Ambrose translated the holy Bodies of SS. Gervasius and Prothasius, thought it sufficient Conviction against the incredulous scoffing Heathens, that Immense Populo Teste, res gesta est, A vast Concourse of People were able to attest the Truth of them; which is exactly our present Case.

I conclude with the Divine Message the Son of God sent to his *Precurſor* in Priſon, to confirm the Diſciples of the *Baptiſt*, and to confound the obdurate *Jews*, which with profound Humility, and the greateſt Deference imaginable, may be apply'd to our glorious *Patroneſs of Wales*, by what you read in this admirable Life; Go and report that the Blind ſee, the Lame walk, the Lepers are made clean, the Deaf hear, the Dead riſe again, &c. the Poor the Goſpel is preach'd, St. Mat. xi. 5. The Omnipotence and Goodneſs of our great God be ador'd and praiſ'd, by all Angels and Saints, for ever. Amen, Amen,



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THE  
LITANIES  
OF  
St. *WENEFRIDE*.

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**L**ORD have Mercy upon us.  
Christ have mercy upon us.  
Lord have Mercy upon us.  
God the Father of Heaven have Mercy upon us.  
God the Son Redeemer of Mankind, have Mercy upon us.  
God the Holy Ghost have Mercy upon us.  
Holy Trinity, One God, have Mercy upon us.  
Holy Mary,  
Holy Mother of God,  
Holy Virgin of Virgins,  
O blessed St. *Wenefride*,  
O humble and mild Virgin,  
O glorious Spouse of Christ,  
O devout and charitable Virgin,  
O sweet Comforter of the Afflicted,  
O singular Example of Chastity,  
O Radiant Star,  
O fairest Flower of the *British* Nation,  
O admirable and elected Vessel,  
O Mirror of Chastity,  
O Mirror of Devotion,  
O Mirror of Piety,  
O bright Lamb of Sanctity,  
O Golden Image of Angelical Purity,  
O Hope and Safety of distressed Pilgrims,

Pray for us.

That

That we may be delivered from all Iniquity,  
 That we may be delivered from all disorder'd Pas-  
 sions of the Mind,  
 That we may be delivered from the Deceits of the  
 World, Flesh, and Devil,  
 That we may be delivered from all Occasions of Sin,  
 That we may be delivered from Plague, Famine,  
 and War,  
 That we may be delivered from the Wrath of God  
 and Eternal Damnation,  
 That we and all Sinners may have true Contrition,  
 and full Remission of our Sins,  
 That all Schismatics, Hereticks, and Infidels may  
 be converted to the Holy Catholick and Apostoli-  
 cal Faith,  
 That we may always hate Sin, and overcome all  
 Temptations,  
 That we may despise all Worldly Vanities and De-  
 lights,  
 That we may ever fear God, and fulfil his holy  
 Will,  
 That we may have both spiritual and corporal  
 Health,  
 That we may devoutly affect Chastity and Purity  
 of Life,  
 That we may fervently love Humility and Mildness,  
 That we may delight in pious Prayer, Fasting, and  
 charitable Alms,  
 That we may discreetly and fervently continue in the  
 Exercise of Godliness,  
 That we may chearfully and constantly suffer for the  
 Love of Christ,  
 That the Souls in Purgatory, and all afflicted Per-  
 sons, may obtain Heavenly Consolations,  
 That our Benefactors, and all that labour to save  
 Souls, may be blessed with abundance of Grace,  
 and everlasting Life,  
 That we may enjoy true Peace, and endless Felicity,  
 That God of his abundant Mercy will vouchsafe to  
 bless this our Pilgrimage,  
 That by thy pious Intercession it may be to the per-  
 fect Health of our Souls and Bodies,  
 That thou wilt vouchsafe to grant our Requests,  
 O blessed *Wenefride*,  
 Let

*Let us pray.*

**A** Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast adorned  
St. *Wenefride* with the Reward of Virginity; Grant,  
we beseech thee, by her pious Intercession, to set aside the  
Delights of the World, and obtain with her the Throne  
of everlasting Glory; through *Jesus Christ* thy Son, who  
with thee liveth and reigneth in the Unity of the Holy  
Ghost for ever. *Amen.*

*Another Prayer.*

**A** Almighty and Everlasting God, we humbly beseech  
thee, that blessed St. *Wenefride* may obtain for us such  
spiritual and temporal Benefits, as are expedient for thy  
holy Service, and our eternal Salvation; through our  
Lord *Jesus Christ* thy Son, who with thee and the Holy  
Ghost liveth and reigneth ever one God, World without  
End. *Amen.*

*The Hymn of St. Wenefride.*

**A** S fragrant Rose in pleasant Spring,  
To God's own Son a Spouse most dear,  
And Martyr rare of Christ our King,  
St. *Wenefride* did flourish here.  
Descended well of **BRITISH RACE**,  
In Faith was firm, in Hope secure,  
With holy Works, and Soul in Grace,  
From worldly Filth preserved pure.  
Cradock this Sacred Maid did kill,  
And him Hell swallowed presently,  
Where Tears in vain do run down still,  
'Mongst burning Flames incessantly.  
A Token sure of this strange Thing,  
Bespotted all with bloody Red,  
A Well by God's Command doth spring,  
Where Tyrant's Sword cut off her Head.  
Here Wonders great God's Hand doth work,  
The Blind doth see, the Dumb doth speak,  
Diseases which in Bodies lurk  
Are cured where Faith is not weak.  
O glorious Virgin *Wenefride*,  
To us the raging Sea appease,  
And free us so from Satan's Dread,  
That he on us may never sieze. *Amen.*



*A Prayer to St. Wenefride.*

**O** Blessed *Wenefride*, O pure Virgin and glorious Martyr, so especially elected, so divinely graced, and wonderfully restored from Death to Life; O singular Hope of all that fly unto thee with full Confidence and Humility; though unworthy, yet we thy devoted Pilgrims make our Addresses unto thee. O Sanctuary of Piety, look upon us with patient Eyes, receive our Petitions, accept our Offerings, and present our Supplications to the Throne of Mercy, that through those thy powerful Intercessions, God will be pleased to bless this our Pilgrimage, and grant us our Request and Desires, through *Jesus Christ* his Son, who with God the Father, and the *Holy Ghost*, liveth and reigneth, ever one God, World without End. *Amen.*

*Another Prayer to St. Wenefride.*

**O** Blessed *St. Wenefride*, O glorious Virgin and Martyr, who hast admirably beautified with the Purple of thy Blood the rare Purity of thy innocent Life, whom God has so specially chosen, so highly privileged, and so wonderfully restored to Life again, gracing thee with the Honour of a living Martyr, causing a Fountain miraculously to spring, bearing a perpetual Memory of thy Name, for the Relief of all diseased and distressed Pilgrims, who shall devoutly beg thy powerful Intercession. O blessed *St. Wenefride*, hear the Prayers, and receive the humble Supplications of thy poor devoted Pilgrims, and obtain that by thy pious Intercession, God of his infinite Mercy will be pleased to grant us a full Pardon and Remission of our Sins, and a Blessing to this our Pilgrimage; and that we may increase and persevere in God's Grace, and enjoy Him eternally in Heaven. This we beg of thee, O blessed Virgin and Martyr, for *Jesus Christ* our Lord and Saviour's Sake. *Amen.*

*The End.**The*

The Note referred to in Page 108 of St. Wenefrede's Life.

**G**IVE as much Glory as you will to *Wenefrede's* heavenly Spouse (if that must be the Name of *Christ*) for the Cure of *Roger Whistons*, or any other, and no one will oppose it; But, in the Name of God, what had *St. Wenefrede* to do, in restoring this poor Cripple? Did he desire her Intercession? No, he was a Quaker. But did she intercede with her Spouse for him? Yes. And did he hearken to her Prayers, and heal him? Yes. How does that appear? The Priests say so, and he was healed. Whatever the Priests say then is true, and whoever is healed at *Holy-well*, is interceded for by *Wenefrede*, and healed at her Intercession. Are not these Conclusions certain, and incontestable? Might not a Man fill up a thousand Pages with Miracles, if these are Miracles? But I will not meddle with that; let these Cures pass for Miracles — I only say, (and pray the *Pilgrims* to take Notice of it) that supposing there was such a Woman once in Being, that she was a good Nun, that her Head was struck off, and set on again, and that she afterwards lived a holy Life, and died in the Reputation of Sanctity — Supposing all these things of *Wenefrede* to be true and certain; (as I affirm not one single Point of them is, or can be proved, by any Rules of History) yet is it not in the Power of any Man living to prove, to any reasonable Man's Conviction, that she does, or ever did, intercede with God, for the Cure of any lame or diseased Person at *Holy-well*, or that God did ever heal or restore any lame or diseased Person, for the Sake or through the Intercession of *St. Wenefrede*. Let any Man try to clear these two Points, if he can; 1. That *Wenefrede* did, at any Time, intercede with God for such a Man, or such a Woman; 2. That God did, at *Wenefrede's* Intercession, restore such Man, or such Woman, to Health or Soundness. Is it enough to say that such a Man or Woman came to *Holy-well* sick and diseased, and made their Prayers to *Wenefrede* to intercede with God to restore them, and went away restored? Is this enough to prove that *Wenefrede* did really and indeed intercede with God for them, merely because they asked her so to do? What Certainty can any one have, that as soon as he has prayed to all the Angels and Archangels, the Apostles, Saints, Martyrs, Confessors, and holy Spirits of Men and Women that are in Heaven, they will intercede with God for him; what Certainty, I say, can he have that they immediately fall down before the Throne, and do it? And so I say of any one particular Saint of the whole Number; what Certainty can any one have, that he or she either hears his Prayer, or if they hear, that they immediately attend, and grant it? May they not possibly demurr? have they not Liberty to consider the Petition, and see if it be reasonable, or just, or fit to offer? I would not be thought to speak too slightly of things that other People set great Value on, and treat in Earnest; but I cannot forbear saying, that having seriously considered all the Reasonings of the Ancients, and the

Improvements of the modern Advocates for praying to Saints, I do not find they have proved, that the Prayers of People on Earth, arrive to the Saints in Heaven, with the hundredth Part of the Certainty, that Letters go from one Country to another, (not by the *Post*, but) by the *Paqueet-Boat* at Sea, subject to all the Winds that blow, and all the Accidents of that uncertain Element. There is, indeed, no thinking how a Saint in Heaven can hear the mental and the vocal Prayers of all that call upon him, from all the different Quarters of the World, at one and the same Time, without supposing such a Knowledge of the Secrets of all Hearts, and of all that is said upon the Earth, as differs little, if any thing, from the Omniscience of God himself, which is an Attribute that, if any be, is incommunicable to a Creature, and without which he could not be qualified to be the Judge of all the Earth. And yet without this Knowledge both of all Hearts and all Tongues, how vain would it be to pray to Saints from all Places? I have never yet seen it well proved that the Saints do intercede with God for Mankind in general, or for the Church Militant in particular: But I will give it for granted that they do, if it pleases God; but it does not follow from thence that they either hear what People ask, or intercede for those especial things which are asked; any more than it follows, that I know what my Relations in the *Indies* ask of God, or want, because I remember them in my daily Prayers, and beg of God to give them what he sees is most expedient for them. Supposing therefore that *Wenefrede* were indeed a Saint in Heaven, and that she did intercede with God, as the rest of the Saints are supposed to do, for the Church in general; yet it would not thence follow, that she interceded for me, in particular, or that she knew who I was, or what I wanted, or knew that I came to ask something of her. None of all these things follow, from supposing her to be a Saint, and a general Intercessor for all Christians. I must therefore have a particular Revelation from God, to tell me that *Wenefrede* did, at such a Time, intercede for me, or else how should I know it? Well, but the *Event* tells me she did; I came to *Holy-well* sick and lame, and there I fell upon my Knees, crossed my self devoutly, lift up my Heart, my Eyes, and Hands to Heaven, drank of the Waters, bath'd my self therein, and prayed to St. *Wenefrede* to pray to God to restore me to my Health and Limbs; and after a due Continuance at the Place, and Repetition of my Prayers, and Use of the Waters, I found my self sound and well. And is not this sufficient Proof and Certainty, that *Wenefrede* did hear my Prayers, did intercede with God at that time for me, and that God, at her Intercession, did restore me? Does not the happy Issue and Event verify and prove all this? No, not one Point; for *Roger Whetstone*, a Quaker and a Cripple, came to *Holy-well*, and drank of the Waters, and bathed himself in them, and recovered his Limbs as well as you; and was so far from praying to *Wenefrede*, that it does not appear



pear he prayed to God himself to be restored. How is it therefore possible for you to prove that you were restored at *Wenefrede's* Intercession, when that poor Man and a hundred more have been restored without her Intercession, not only such as were ignorant of her Saintship, but such as were downright Disbelievers, and such as only trusted in God? As therefore your praying to *Wenefrede*, does not suppose that she hears you; nor your desiring her to intercede for you, suppose that she does indeed intercede for you; so neither does your obtaining what you ask, suppose that you obtain it for that Intercession's sake. These are all of them fallacious Consequences that crafty Priests delude poor Pilgrims with: And every beneficial Cure that a Protestant receives at *Holy-well*, is a Demonstration that *Wenefrede's* Intercession is both a needless and a useless Thing, although it should be innocent to ask it, which I am far from thinking it to be; but I would not enter into any new Controversy. I have gone thus far, in hopes that what I have already offered might make it needless to consider the *Litanies* and *Prayers* which I see are printed anew at the End of this little Book: For if what I have said in the foregoing Pages to the discrediting this Legend of St. *Wenefrede* shall not have its Weight, the Pilgrims will go on in their old Way for any thing I shall say farther: But if it have, then is my farther Labour superceded also, and they will go to God and seek their Remedies at His Hands, through the Intercession, and for the Sake and Merits of Jesus Christ alone, our common Lord and Saviour, who ever liveth to make Intercession for us, and is both able and desirous to save to the utmost all that come to God by Him.

I will therefore trouble the *Devout Pilgrims* with no more Arguings, but pray them to consider these few Things following, which I have in several Places mentioned before.

Whether they would ever pray, unless they were sure there were a God?

Whether they would ever pray to God, unless they were sure that God heard their Prayers?

Whether they would pray to God, unless they were sure that he could give them what they asked; and would, if he saw it fitting and expedient for them?

Whether God has not commanded all Men to come to Him by Prayer?

Whether he has not commanded all Men to come to Him by Jesus Christ, their Mediator and Intercessor?

Whether Jesus Christ alone be not an able, willing, and sufficient Mediator and Intercessor? or whether there be Need of any other?

Whether it be as certain that there was such a Woman as *Wenefrede*, as that there is any Man or Woman now living in *North-Wales*? If not, how can they pray to her?

Whether it be as certain that *Wenefrede's* Head was cut off, and set on again, as that any other Saint heretofore suffered

Mar-

Martyrdom? If not, how know they that she was a Martyr? Whether it be as certain that she is now a Saint in Heaven, as that St. Peter and St. Paul are now in Heaven? If not, how can they pray to her?

Whether it be certain that all who are in Heaven hear all the Prayers that are made to them on Earth?

Whether the Saints know distinctly and separately the Prayers of one Man from another?

How is it, that Men on Earth can be sure that such a one is a Saint in Heaven, and that she hears their Prayers, and intercedes with God for them, unless God hath told them so either in the Scriptures, or by other particular Revelation?

Hath God by either of these Ways told them, that *Wenefrede* is a Saint in Heaven, and hears their Prayers, and intercedes for them? If not, how come they to pray to her?

Is there any Command, any thing like a Command, in the Scriptures, that Men should pray to Saints? Is there any Encouragement so to do? And who would venture on such a Practice without a positive Command, when they may go to God by Christ, which is commanded, and to which there can be no Exception or Objection, and for whose Sake alone it is that any Prayers are heard or granted?

And now I cannot chuse but hope, that the devout Pilgrims, after considering all these Things, will require at their Priests Hands a more full and satisfactory Account of the Certainty of the Life, Beheading, Resuscitation, Second Death, and Miracles of St. *Wenefrede*, than Prior Robert (500 Years after her supposed Life) hath given them in a poor, miserable, suspicious Legend; and that they will no longer address themselves to one by Prayer (of whose very Being they are, and can be so little assured) in Terms as great, as strong, and weighty, as they would use to Jesus Christ himself. Such are the following ones in the Prayer to St. *Wenefrede*: *O singular Hope of all that fly unto thee with Confidence and Humility; though unworthy, yet we, thy devoted Pilgrims, make our Addresses unto thee. O Sanctuary of Piety, look upon us with patient Eyes, receive our Petitions, accept our Offerings, and present our Supplications to the Throne of Mercy, that through these thy powerful Intercessions, God will be pleased to bless this our Pilgrimage, and grant us our Request and Desires, through Jesus Christ his Son, &c.* Think with your selves if this be right, to take a Saint upon Trust from the Tradition of a poor, ignorant, obscure, and superstitious Corner of the Land, dress'd up by a Monk, who was employed to steal her Bones, and thereby bring the Advantage of Oblations to his Monastery, and give her such great Names and Titles, such Appellations and Attributes, in Prayers address'd to her herself, as you would give to Jesus Christ himself, the Everlasting Son of God, and King of Saints, if you should go on Pilgrimage to any Place devoted to his Name and Honour to ask him any Favour. Think with your selves, I pray you, for your Good, if this be right and fitting.

FINIS.

St.

## St. Beino's Life and Miracles.

Translated from the

**B R I T I S H M S.**

**A** Gentleman lived at *Banhenic* in *Powisland*, above the River then called † *Sabrina*, but now *Hafren*. His Name was *Bugu*, and his Wife was *Beren*, Daughter of *Lunden*. It was an innocent and harmless Couple, and obey'd the Commands of God in all things as blameless as they could. And they had no Son. And they were well stricken in Years, having past the best of their Time. And they had lain together for twelve Years without knowing one another, by mutual Consent. And on a Work-day as they talked together, behold an Angel came to them, and his Raiment was as white as Snow, and said to them, Be of good Chear, for God hath heard your Prayers; and the Angel said to the Husband, This Night thou shalt know thy Wife, and she shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and he shall be in Favour both with God and Man. And as the Angel advised so they did, and *Beren* conceived that very Night, and brought forth a Son, and called him *Beino*; And they brought up the young Child at home till he could walk, and then they sent him to a Saint in *Gwentland*, called *Tangusius*. And his Parents had Divine Directions to dispose of him thus. And with that Saint he lived till, by the Help of God, he had learn'd all the Holy Bible. There he learn'd the Service and Orders of the Church, and was ordained Priest. And *Thyr*, King of *Gwentland*, took Notice of him; he was a meek, chaste, and a generous Man, very ready to be advised; he received *Beino* honourably and friendly, gave him a Gold Ring and a Crown, and was a Disciple to and Monk under *St. Beino*; and he gave him three Estates in *Ewas*, and the People also in those Divisions with their Goods and Chartels. At that Time *Beino's* Father was sick, and they despaired of his Life, and he sent a Messenger to his Son *Beino*, and commanded him on his Blessing to come to him. Then *Beino* spoke to his Friends and Disciples, Stay you here in this

† *Severn.* \* *Monmouthshire.*



Place while I go to see my Father now dying. And so they did. And St. *Beino* recommended them to the King and the Gentlemen of that Country. And he went to the Place where his Father was ill; and his Father, after Communion and Confession, made a good End, and died. Then *Beino* stayed in his Father's Estate, built a Church there, and dedicated it to our Lord Christ. And he planted an Acorn on the Side of his Father's Grave, which grew to be a great Oak in Height and Compass, and a Branch of that Oak reached to the very Ground, and from the Ground again to the Top of the Tree. And there was a Piece of the Branch in the Ground, and always is. And if an *Englishman* go between this Part of the Branch and the Root of the Tree, he shall suddenly die; but if a *Welshman*, no Harm shall befall him. And when *Beino* had lived a long time in his Father's Township, he left the Place, and he went forwards to *Mawn*, the Son of *Brochwel*. He received him very kindly and hospitably; and then *Mawn* gave an Offering to God and *Beino* for his own and his Father's Soul. And on a Work-day, as *Beino* was travelling by the River *Serurn*, he could hear the Voice of an *Englishman* hollooming to his Hounds, hunting a Hare on the other Side of the River, crying out as loud as he could *Kergis, Kergis*, which in his Language was encouraging the Dogs. And when *Beino* heard the Voice of an *Englishman*, he immediately turned back to his Disciples, and bid his Sons put on their Cloaths and Shoes and leave that Place, for I hear the Voice of a Man of another Nation t'other Side of the River hollooming to his Dogs, who shall conquer this Place, and keep it in their Possession. Then *Beino* spoke to one of his Disciples, named *Rithwlint*; My Son, says he, obey me, I would have thee stay here, and my Blessing be with thee: And I shall leave with thee a Cross I have made my self. And that Disciple received his Master's Blessing, and stay'd there. And *Beino* came to the Disciples at *Myvood*, and there he stay'd with St. *Yssilio* forty Days and forty Nights. From thence he came to King *Cynan*, the Son of *Brochwel*, and begged of him a Place to pray for his own Soul and those of his Companions: And the King gave him *Gwyddelwern*, a Place that had its Name from the *Irishman* whom *Beino* raised from the Dead there, whose Wife had been the Occasion of his Death; and there *Beino* built a Church. About this Time *Cynan*'s Nephews came from hunting, and begged some Meat of him. Then *Beino* commanded his Servants to fetch a Runt from the Mountain, and to kill him, to entertain the Huntsmen that begged Meat of him. And they did so. And the Flesh was put into the Pot to be boiled the third Hour of the Day; and it was in the Pot till the Afternoon, and the Men all the while blowing the Fire under the Pot, and yet the Water was not warm in the Pot, nor had the Flesh changed its Colour. Up-

on

On this one of the Laymen said, This Scholar with his Art has done this, that we might have nothing to eat. And when Beino heard this Word fall from his Mouth, Let him be accursed, said he; and he died before the End of that Day. Then Beino discoursed with the Sons of that *† wife Man*, and told them, What your Father has given free to God will you demand Rent, and Service for? May that God whom I serve, and gave me this Grant, cause that none of your Heirs enjoy this, and destroy you from this Kingdom, and an eternal one hereafter. And as Beino prayed, so he obtained. Then Beino left that Place, and walked on the Side of the River *Der*, to get a Place to pray to God in. And he found none till he came to *Temie*, the Son of *Elwyd*; and this *Temie* gave Beino a Town to inherit for ever; and there Beino built a Church, and dedicated it to God. Within a short time *Temie* left this solitary Place to Beino. And on a Work-day *Temie* and his Wife went to Church to hear Mass and Sermon from Beino, and left his Daughter at home to keep House. And behold she saw the King of that Place coming to the House, whose Name was *Caradoc*. She immediately met him, and was civil to him. He asked where her Father was? She answered, At Church; if you have any Business with him, stay for him, and he will come presently. I will not stay, except you promise to be my Concubine. The Maid answered, I'll not be thy Concubine, for you are a King, and descended from Kings, and I am too mean to be your Concubine. But, says she, if you stay till I return from my Chamber, I will do what you please: And under Pretence of going to her Chamber, she fled to the Church where her Father and Mother were. The King perceiving her to fly, pursued her, and overtook her as she was entring the Church-door, and with his Sword struck off her Head into the Church, and the Body fell without. Beino and the Father and Mother saw this: And Beino look'd in the King's Face, and told him, I will beg of God that he spare not thee any more than thou hast spared this good Maid. And in that Instant the King melted into a Pool, and he was no more seen in this World. Then Beino took the Maid's Head, and put it on her Body, and spread his own Mantle over the Body, and bid the Father and Mother that lamented over her be quiet a little while, and leave her as she was till Mass was over. Then Beino offered to God, and as soon as Mass was over the Maid was alive, and she wiped the Sweat off her Face; so God and Beino made her full well. Where the Blood fell on the Ground a Fountain arose, which to this Day cures Men and Cattel of their Distempers, and the Fountain was called from the Maid's Name *Winifrid's Well*. And many saw this and believed in

† *Selyf*.

Q

Christ,

Christ: But the greatest Man that believed was Caduan, King of North-Wales, who gave Beino a great deal of Land. And when Caduan died, Beino went to visit Cadwallawn, Caduan's Son, who succeeded him in the Kingdom of North-Wales: And Beino begged to have the Land Caduan had promised; for he had there no Place to worship God or to dwell in. Then the King gave Beino a Place in *Arwen*, called *Gwardag*. And Beino gave the King a Gold Scepter, that Gynan, the Son of Breckwell, had given him at his Death, which Scepter was worth Sixty Cows. And there Beino built a Church, and began a Wall about it; and on a Work-day when he was making this Wall, and his Disciples with him, behold they could see a Woman with a young Child in her Arms, begging of Beino to bless the Child. Stay, Woman, a little, says Beino, till we finish this Work. And the Child cried, and would not be pacify'd. Then Beino ask'd the Woman why the Child cryed? Good Saint, answered the Woman, he has good Reason. What is that Reason says Beino? why, without Doubt the Land which you possess and build upon, says the Woman, is the Inheritance of this Child. Then Beino bid his Disciples withdraw their Hands from the Work, while he baptized the Child, and to prepare him his Coach, and we will go with this Woman and her Child to visit the King who gave me this Land. Then Beino and his Disciples set out with the Woman and her Child, and came to *Caer Segant* where the King was, now called *Caernarvon*. Then Beino spoke to the King—Why hast thou given me another Man's Land? Why, says the King, who claims it? The Child, says Beino, that is in that Woman's Arms is Heir of this Land. And Beino said, give the Child his Land, and give me other Land in its stead, or return me the present I gave thee, viz. the Scepter. But the oppressing and proud King answered, I will not change the Land, and the Present thou gavest me I have given it to another. Then Beino was very angry, and told the King, I will beg of God that within a while thou mayst have no Land at all; and Beino went off and left him accursed. Now there was one *Gwyddeint*, Cousin German to the King, who followed after Beino, and overtook him the other Side of the River *Seint*, where Beino sat on a Stone by the River-side, and he gave God and Beino for his own Soul and the Soul of *Cadwallawn* his Cousin-German, the Town of *Calyng* for ever without any Rent or Service accruing out of it, and made a good Title of it; and there Beino did many Miracles, by the Help of God, which no Man could number. At that Time it happened that one of the Workmen of *Aberfron* went to the Palace in *Gwent*, and a handfomer Man could not be seen in a Summer's Day. When the Princess in *Gwent* saw him, she

\* Gwall. † Segentium.

fell



fell so deep in Love with him, that she could not be without him: And the King her Father hearing of it, chose rather to give his Daughter to him, than that she should take him herself of her own Accord; preferring such a handsome Man and loyal, to be the King's Son, and a Nobleman. In Process of Time the young Man perswaded his Wife to visit his own Country, and they came to a Place called *Pennard* in *Arum*, and there they lighted off their Horses and rested; and the Princess his Wife, being weary, fell asleep. While she was sleeping he began to consider with himself how he must be ashamed in his own Country, having a Wife with him so nobly descended, and that he had no other way to maintain her but to go to the Works where he got his Livelihood before; and there, by the Devil's Instigation, he cut off her Head with his Sword. He went on his Journey to his own Country with his fine Horses, and Silver, and Gold; and when he came to the King, he bought a Place for himself to be *Steward of the Household*. In the mean time a Shepherd of *Beino's* found out the dead Body, and told *Beino*. And *Beino* came on the Wings of the Wind to the Corpse, and squeezed the Head to the Body, and fell upon his Knees and prayed thus, O Lord, Creator of Heaven and Earth, who knowest all Things, raise this dead Body to Life again: And immediately the Woman was restored to Life, and told *Beino* all that happened. Then *Beino* spoke to her, Chuse you whether you will go to your own Country, or serve God here. The Woman answered, I chuse to serve God here with you, who raised me from the Dead. And where the Blood fell to the Ground a clear Fountain did rise, and was called from the Woman's Name *Digin-well*. And some time after a Brother of the Princess, *Iden*, the Son of *Ynyr* of *Gwent*, came to *Beino* to visit his Sister; and when he came there he found his Sister with *Beino* serving God. And he asked his Sister whether she would come home? She answered, that she would not leave the Place where she had been raised from the Dead. And when *Iden* saw that he could not prevail with his Sister, he begged of *Beino* to accompany him as far as *Aberfron*, to petition the King there to compel his Sister's Husband to restore the Horses, Gold, and Silver he had taken from his Sister. And they travelled both together to the King's Palace; and *Iden* soon saw the Man he enquired after, and immediately he drew his Sword, and cut off his Head. Then the King was sore displeased, and ordered the Man that killed his Steward to be apprehended. And *Beino* said, Lay not your Hands upon the Man that came with me. Then the King swore with great Indignation that he would immediately order the Man to be destroyed, except *Beino* would raise to Life the Man that was killed: And *Beino*, without any Hesitation, trusting in God, raised the Man that was

killed to Life again. And the King repented, that he had tempted the Saint; and he gave *Beino* the Palace he now lives in, called *Beino*.

Many other things have we omitted to speak of, lest the Book should grow too bulky. Here is only a Taste of *Beino's* Miracles. And no one knows what God has done for *Beino's* Sake, but God alone. And whosoever does Good, it is most certain that God will be his Helper. Every thing that God commanded, *Beino* performed. He gave Meat and Drink to the Hungry and Thirsty, Cloaths to the Naked, Entertainment to Strangers, and he would visit the Sick, and those that were in Prison. He would perform exactly every good thing the holy Scripture commanded. And now *Beino's* Days were at an End, and the seventh Day after *Easter* he could see the Heavens opened, and Angels descending and ascending up again: And then *Beino* spoke; I see, says he, the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and *Peter* and *Paul*, † *Duiduirion* and *Daniel*, Saints and Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs, appearing to me. And I see amongst all these, seven Angels standing before the Throne of the Almighty Father, and all the Fathers of Heaven and Singers, saying, Blessed are they whom thou hast chosen, and taken to thy self to live with thee for ever. I hear the Voice of Almighty Father inviting me, and saying to me, My Son, throw off thy Weight of Flesh from thee; now the Time is come, thou art invited with thy Brethren to the everlasting Feast: Let thy Body remain in the Earth, and let the Host of Heaven, the Angels, carry thy Soul to the Kingdom of Heaven, which thou hast deserved here by thy Works. And now the Day of Judgment will be greater, when the Lord shall speak to his Saints, You blessed Sons of my Father, come to inherit the Kingdom that was prepared for you since the Beginning of the World; where Life shall be without Death, Youth without old Age, Health without Sickness, and Joy without Sadness. The Saints of the first Degree with God the Father shall be next the Arch-angels, and the Disciples of Jesus Christ, next to the nine Degrees in Heaven of such as have not sinned; next to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

*Amen.*

Let us now beg the Mercy of God Almighty, thro' the Assistance of St. Beino, that we with him may enjoy eternal Life, for ever and ever. Amen.

† *Druidism.*

*E Cod. MS. in Bibl. Bodl. sup. Art. A. 6c. 72.  
fol. 189. a.*

*Saint Vonefred the holi Virgine.*

**U**nefred was an holy Mayde, so ich ondirfonde,  
In the tyme tho Syre *Aleyn* was King of *Ingelondes*:  
This ilke King was a good Man, so God gef the Cas,  
They his Sone was a Fool, thilke tyme nas  
5 And that Men seth wel ofte, also thinketh me;  
Therefore wel is the Child that may I the be Fadir what he  
be.

This holy Mayde lerned here Byleue tho  
With a Prest of the Contre, that men cleped *Benne*.  
This Mayde he taugt ever wel to fien al Lecherye,  
10 And to kepe here Body clene fram Synne and fram Folye.  
And the Mayde him behet myd good wille tho  
That 3he wolde clene Mayde byleven everemo.

In a tyme hit byfil that the deuel alone  
Acqm, after that here Frenedes to Chirche weren agone.  
15 The Kinges Sone com to Here in his Rebaudye,  
And gan here byfechen faste, to don his Lecherye.  
The Mayde him answered and sayde anon ry3t  
Ich nam nou3t to ben thin Hore nouthe I dy3t ary3t:  
Ich wole gone to Boure, and come to The anon;  
20 And than with my Body thy wil thou my3t done.  
For 3he wolde ascapye, the Mayde seyde al this,  
And for 3he nolde nou3t habbe with him to don I wis.

Tho 3he was withinne a Dore 3he ondede anon,  
And futhre toward Chirche wel 3erne 3he gangon.  
25 Anon tho this fool Child herof the soth isay,  
That he was bygylid thorow3 that fayre May.  
And after here wel quickliche anon he gan to go,  
And anon drou3 out his Swerd tho he com here to.  
And faste by the Chirche dore he smot of here heved;  
30 And thus was this holy Mayde of here Lyf byreved.

God cheued anon that this dede was nou3t gode,  
Therefore with the dede this 3ong Child worth tho wode;  
In all his woodhede he leste rydes thre,  
And futhre he deyde sodeynliche, so the Bok telleth me:

35 The



- 35 The Devel was tho iredy, and Body and Soule nom,  
 So that no Man nyfte whodyr that he bycom.  
 In the stede that the Mayde so byhevedid was  
 A swythe fayr Welle anon Sprong bycas.  
 And som men told in suththe that therby tho stode,  
 40 That ther berhin Stonys ispringed al with blode.  
 Ther nys so queinte nother more ne lasse  
 That mowe the blodis dropis fram the Stonys wassche.  
 Ac ech Mon bereth witpessse that hem up nom,  
 That hit is a tokene of here martirdom.  
 45 Tho this holy Prest *Beuno* ihurd of al this fare,  
 Sore him of thougt that he nadde I ben thare :  
 And for that hit was nougt the tyme that zhe cholve ben  
 dede.  
 Therefore a Predycacioun to the Peple he hath isede.  
 And in his Predycacioun Ich wor he seyde this,  
 50 Hit ner nougt tyme that the Mayde zit partid fram Us,  
 Ac bende wolde that zhe cholve herafter libbe longe;  
 And wel ferry Crist, mede to ondirfonge.  
 Therefore ich zou bidde, that ze bidde with Me,  
 To oure Lord Ihu Crist that is so bende and fre,  
 55 That heut sende to day a party of his Grace,  
 And arere this Mayde to lyve in this Place.  
 The heved to this Body this holy Prest gan don  
 And thorwz his Love and here that Mayde aros anon.  
 Ever therafter aboute here Nekke was as they hit were a  
 Threde  
 60 In tokenyng of the matterdom that zhe was onso dede.  
 Whyter thing ne myzte be than the Threde was.  
 The Peple seyde for joye alle *Deo gratias*  
 Thorwz *Beuno* his rede, abyte suththe zhe nom,  
 And ladde swyth hard lif and good Nonne bycom.  
 65 *Beuno* in a tyme to here seyde tho,  
*Wonsrad*, Ihu Crist it wole that we to party sto.  
 For into another Contre nede ich mot wende,  
 And there nedis to dwellin to my lyses end.  
 Ech zer thou most sende som presant, ich the telle,  
 70 And what thou wolt me sende cast hit in the Welle.  
 Of that thou dost therinne ne drede the ryt nougt,  
 That hit ne chal thorwz Goddes grace, to me ben well  
 ibrougt.  
 And after this, Vij zer hennes, thou chalt fare,  
 And thy lyf dayis enden Ich wor elleswhare.  
 75 And loke in thyne lyve that thou love Chastete,  
 For nedes ich most henne no long ne man ich her be.  
 At the Welle I of spake the Mayde tho him brougte.  
 Suththe tornyd here agen and a Chesible him wrougte,  
 By

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- By here myȝt ȝhe hit made both good and ryche,  
 80 That nas in all the Londe no Chesible here ilyche.  
 Tho hit was iredy, thorw work of here honde,  
 In a whit Mantel the Chesible the hit woude :  
 ȝhe leyde hit in the Streame, that ȝhe ifoude ther,  
 And thorw ȝ Goddes grace the Streem hit forȝh ber,  
 85 Into that ilke selve stede that *Beuno* woned tho.  
 And they hit was from the Welle thritty myle and mo ;  
 And therinne myȝt wel I se, how good Crist is,  
 And that hit was a Merakle eche man may wite, I wis.  
 After that the Vij ȝer wer ibrouȝt to ende,  
 90 Nede moſte *Wonefred* to other Stede wende.  
 And for *Beuno* the holy Prest hit had I seyde before,  
 Nede moſte these wordis to soth ben I core.  
 Thennes for to wende ȝhe gan her dyȝte I wis,  
 Into a swynne wilde Stede that *Veserat* icleped is.  
 95 Bothe Monkes and Nonnes this Mayde ifoude tho,  
 That ladden good lyte, and clene; so ech man anȝt to do.  
*Bulopius* het the Abbot that here Mayster was there,  
 Swythe moche he dede his Wille his Monkes for to lere.  
 A Modir hadde this Abbot that him to man bare,  
 100 Mayster of the Nonnes Ich wot that ȝhe was thare.  
 By here ryȝt name Men cleped here *Eufabie*  
 For moche ȝhe hatyed Sinne and loved Cortesie.  
 Therefore Women drouȝ to here both for and ner,  
 For in alle the Londe ȝhe ne hadde no Per.  
 105 Thorw ȝ red of the Abot *Wonefred* to here drouȝ  
 Eyther of other is Felechiȝe was tho glad inouȝ.  
 After that *Euxebie* partyd of this lyve,  
*Wonefred* dwelled in here Stede ȝeres ten and fyve.  
 Mek ȝhe was, and of ſayr Speche, and swyth mylde of  
 mode,  
 110 And thorw here holy Speche ȝhe brouȝte Mony to Gode.  
 Suththe tho God sente his Grace, to Heven ȝhe gan wende  
 Now Ihu for the love of Here, thedir us bringe at oure  
 ende. *Amen.*

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SINCE the printing off a great Part of this Book, I have  
 seen (by the Favour of *Roger Gale, Esq;* the worthy Son  
 of a most learned Father, the late *Dean of York*) another MS.  
 Life of *Wonefred*, which was, I guess, taken out of *Rob. Sa-*  
*lop.* bur has none of his Preface, differs very much in many  
 Places, is much shorter, and leaves off entirely at the Death  
 of *Theonia*; as does the old *English Legend*, and this *Life in Verse*,  
 which I guess to be about 400 Years old. Some of whose  
 Words I have tried to explain, but many more I understand

not. According to this above-mentioned MS. *Wendred's Day* is the 22d of June.

*Abyr*, Habit of a Nun.

*Alaspy*, to escape.

*Beber*, promised.

*Bidde*, pray.

*Byleven*, to live.

*Ch.* for *Sh.* v. 11, 47.

*Fare*, go away.

*Flen*, to flee.

*Foul*, foul.

*Gonzen*, went.

3 for g, v. iii; for y, xxii; for

gh, ix; for s, xii.

3em, carefully, diligently.

*Het*, was called.

*Hende*, gentle, good.

*Hit*, it.

I, added to a Word, makes it signify no more than it did

before: *Iay*, saw; *iredy*,

ready, *ispringed*, sprinkled;

*ibard*, heard; *idys*, decked.

*ik*, the same.

*Libbe*, live. The y was written like a b.

*Mye*, with.

*Nem*, took; to *him* is to steal.

*Quint*, neat, curious.

*Nar*, was not; *nam*, am not.

*hold*, would not; *will*, will

not; *hadde*, had not.

3 for d, v. i.

*Rebandit*, obscene Talk.

*Stede*, Place.

*The*, when, and then.

*They*, altho.

*Wend*, go.

*Woned*, dwelt.

*Worth the wode*, for grew mad.

**FINIS.**



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